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**BULLETIN**  
**OF THE**  
**BRITISH**  
**ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB**

EDITED BY  
CAPTAIN C. H. B. GRANT



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**Volume 70**  
**1950**

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## PREFACE

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NINE Meetings were held during the year 1950, from January to June and October to December inclusive.

The Annual General Meeting took place on Wednesday, 18th January, 1950, at the Rembrandt Hotel, South Kensington, and was attended by 34 Members.

Special General Meetings were held at the Rembrandt Hotel, South Kensington, on 15th February and 15th November, 1950, and were attended by 39 and 17 Members respectively.

The number of attendances at the nine meetings were as follows:—  
Members of the Club 295, Guests of the Club 7, Other Guests 68,  
a total of 370.

The Guests of the Club were Mr. E. Banks, Mrs. D. Lack, Mrs. Moore, Dr. & Mrs. R. C. Murphy, Mr. & Mrs. R. H. N. Smithers.

C. H. B. GRANT.

*London, December, 1950.*

## COMMITTEE 1950.

Sir PHILIP MANSON-BAHR, *Chairman* (elected 1950).

Colonel R. MEINERTZHAGEN, *Vice-Chairman* (elected 1950).

Captain C. H. B. GRANT, *Editor* (elected 1947).

Mr. N. J. P. WADLEY, *Hon. Secretary* (elected 1950).

Mr. C. N. WALTER, *Hon. Treasurer* (elected 1950).

Lieut.-Commdr. C. P. STAPLES (elected 1948).

Mr. R. P. DONALDSON (elected 1950).

Colonel O. E. WYNNE (elected 1950).

# OFFICERS OF THE BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB, PAST AND PRESENT.

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## Chairmen.

P. L. SCLATER, F.R.S.	1892-1913.
Lord ROTHSCHILD, F.R.S.	1913-1918.
W. L. SCLATER.	1918-1924.
H. F. WITHERBY.	1924-1927.
Dr. P. R. LOWE.	1927-1930.
Major S. S. Flower.	1930-1932.
D. A. BANNERMAN.	1932-1935.
G. M. MATHEWS.	1935-1938.
Dr. A. LANDSBOROUGH THOMSON.	1938-1943.
D. SETH-SMITH.	1943-1946.
Dr. J. M. HARRISON.	1946-1949.
Sir PHILIP MANSON-BAHR.	1950-

## Vice-Chairmen.

Lord ROTHSCHILD, F.R.S.	1930-1931.
W. L. SCLATER.	1931-1932.
H. F. WITHERBY.	1932-1933.
G. M. MATHEWS.	1933-1934.
N. B. KINNEAR.	1934-1935.
H. WHISTLER.	1935-1936.
D. SETH-SMITH.	1936-1937.
Col. R. SPARROW.	1937-1938.
Dr. G. CARMICHAEL LOW.	1938-1939.
Hon. GUY CHARTERIS.	1938-1939.
W. L. SCLATER.	1939-1940.
Dr. D. A. BANNERMAN.	1939-1940.
Captain C. H. B. GRANT.	1940-1943.
B. W. TUCKER.	1940-1943.
F. J. F. BARRINGTON.	1943-1945.
Dr. E. HOPKINSON.	1943-1945.
C. W. MACKWORTH-PRAED.	1945-1946.
Dr. J. M. HARRISON.	1945-1946.
Lt.-Col. W. P. C. TENISON.	1947-1948.
Sir PHILIP MANSON-BAHR.	1946-1947.
B. G. HARRISON.	1946-1947.
Miss E. M. GODMAN.	1947-1948.
Col. R. MEINERTZHAGEN.	1948-1949.
Major A. G. L. SLADEN.	1948-1949.
Col. R. MEINERTZHAGEN.	1950-

**Editors.**

R. BOWDLER SHARPE.	1892-1904.
W. R. OGILVIE-GRANT.	1904-1914.
D. A. BANNERMAN.	1914-1915.
D. SETH-SMITH.	1915-1920.
Dr. P. R. LOWE.	1920-1925.
N. B. KINNEAR.	1925-1930.
Dr. G. CARMICHAEL LOW.	1930-1935.
Captain C. H. B. GRANT.	1935-1940.
Dr. G. CARMICHAEL LOW.	1940-1945.
Lt.-Col. W. P. C. TENISON.	1945-1947.
Captain C. H. B. GRANT.	1947-

**Honorary Secretaries and Treasurers.**

HOWARD SAUNDERS.	1892-1899.
W. E. DE WINTON.	1899-1904.
H. F. WITHERBY.	1904-1914.
Dr. P. R. LOWE.	1914-1915.
C. G. TALBOT-PONSONBY.	1915-1918.
D. A. BANNERMAN.	1918-1919.
Dr. PHILIP GOSSE.	1919-1920.
J. L. BONHOTE.	1920-1922.
C. W. MACKWORTH-PRAED.	1922-1923.
Dr. G. CARMICHAEL LOW.	1923-1929.
C. W. MACKWORTH-PRAED.	1929-1935.

**Honorary Secretaries.**

Dr. A. LANDSBOROUGH	
THOMSON.	1935-1938.
C. R. STONOR.	1938-1940.
N. B. KINNEAR.	1940-1943.
Dr. G. CARMICHAEL LOW.	1943-1945.
Lt.-Col. W. P. C. TENISON.	1945-1947.
Captain C. H. B. GRANT.	1947.
W. E. GLEGG.	1947-1949.
N. J. P. WADLEY.	1950-

**Honorary Treasurers.**

C. W. MACKWORTH-PRAED.	1935-1936.
Major A. G. L. SLADEN.	1936-1942.
Miss E. P. LEACH	1942-1949.
C. N. WALTER.	1950-

## LIST OF MEMBERS.

## DECEMBER, 1950.

As for 1949 with the following changes:—

*Resigned or died during 1950:—*

Mr. H. B. CONOVER, Mr. P. H. T. HARTLEY, Mr. R. C. HOMES, Major-General H. P. W. HUTSON, Mr. C. McFARLANE INGLIS, Mr. T. A. M. JACK, Mr. D. MACPHIE, Lt.-Col. R. F. MEIKLEJOHN, Mr. K. PIERCY, Major G. H. R. PYE-SMITH, Lieut. C. R. STONOR, Mr. B. W. TUCKER.

New Members in 1950:—

- 1950. BARTHOLOMEW, JAMES; Glenorchard, Torrance, near Glasgow, Scotland.
- 1950. BROWNLOW, Lt.-Col. H. G., R.E.; c/o Lloyds Bank Ltd., Cox's & King's Branch, 6, Pall Mall, London, S.W.1.
- 1950. CLAY, Miss THERESA; c/o British Museum (Natural History), Cromwell Road, London, S.W.7.
- 1950. FORSTER, Miss ELIZABETH; 608, Grenville House, Dolphin Square, London, S.W.1.
- 1950. HUDSON, A. C.; 50, Queen Anne Street, Cavendish Square, London, W.1.\*
- 1950. JOHNSTONE, Mrs. V. R.; 81, Cadogan Square, London, S.W.1.\*
- 1950. MORLEY, J. V.; Old House Farm, Marton, Blackpool.
- 1950. PHILLIPS, Mrs. C. P. R.; The Chase, Sible Hedingham, Halstead, Essex.
- 1950. POOLE, JOHN; 21, Sweetcroft Lane, Hillingdon, Uxbridge, Middlesex.\*
- 1950. RACENIS, Prof. Dr. J.; Escuela de Ciencias, Universidad Central, Caracas, Venezuela, South America.
- 1950. RICHARDS, Hon. Mrs. W. A.; 40, Swakeleys Road, Ickenham, Middlesex.\*
- 1950. RUSSELL, J. A. S.; Monkswood, Gt. Hallingbury, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire.
- 1950. STAPLES, Mrs. C. P.; Hedgerows, Ickenham, Middlesex.\*
- 1950. WILKINS, G. T.; Mayles, The Drive, Cobham, Surrey.

Change of addresses:—

- 1948. COOMBES, R. A. H.; c/o The Zoological Museum, Tring, Hertfordshire.
- 1946. DALGETY, C. T. (*Committee*, 1948–1950); Radwell Mill, Baldock, Hertfordshire.

1904. KINNEAR, Sir NORMAN B., C.B. (*Editor*, 1925–1930; *Vice-Chairman*, 1934–1935; *Hon. Secretary*, 1940–1943); 2, Burghley Road, Wimbledon, London, S.W.19.
1926. LEWIS, JOHN SPEDAN; Longstock House, Stockbridge, Hampshire.
1945. McCULLOCH, Lt.-Col. G.; 5, Roy Road, Northwood, Middlesex.
1924. McNEILE, J. H. (*Committee*, 1935–1938); 6, Cresswell Gardens, London, S.W.7.
1947. MONK, Dr. J. F.; The Gables, Goring, Reading, Berkshire.
1949. MOORE, Commdr. H. H. R., D.S.C., R.N.; Milton Cottage, Church Street, Uckfield, Sussex.
1946. PAYN, Lt.-Col. W. A.; Central Hotel, Andover, Hampshire.
1927. THOMSON, A. LANDSBOROUGH, C.B., O.B.E., D.Sc., F.R.S.E. (*Committee*, 1930–1933; *Hon. Secretary*, 1935–1938; *Chairman*, 1938–1943); 42, Girdwood Road, Southfields, London, S.W.18.
1897. TICEHURST, N. F., O.B.E., M.B., F.R.C.S. (*Committee*, 1912–1914); Spots House, Small Hythe, Tenterden, Kent.
1948. WAGSTAFFE, R.; Liverpool Public Museums, Carnatic Hall, Elmswood Road, Liverpool.
1948. WESTALL, Surgeon-Captain P. R.; Box Bush, Walberswick, Suffolk.

Member omitted from 1949 List:—

1949. BENSON, Miss S. V.; Tudor Lodge, Redgrave, Diss, Norfolk.

\*Associate Members.

## BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB.

(Founded 5 October, 1892).

### TITLE AND OBJECTS.

The objects of the Club, which shall be called the "British Ornithologists' Club", are the promotion of scientific discussion between Members of the British Ornithologists' Union and others interested in ornithology, and to facilitate the publication of scientific information connected with ornithology.

### RULES.

(As amended, 15 November, 1950).

### MANAGEMENT.

(1) The affairs of the Club shall be managed by a Committee, to consist of a Chairman to be elected for three years, and who shall at the end of that period not be eligible for re-election for the next term; one Vice-Chairman, who shall serve for three years and who shall at

the end of that period not be eligible for re-election for the next term; an Editor of the 'Bulletin' to be elected for five years, and who shall at the end of that period not be eligible for re-election for the next term; a Secretary and a Treasurer, who shall be elected for a term of one year, but who shall be eligible for re-election at the next term. There shall be, in addition, four other Members, the senior of whom shall retire each year, the vacancy being filled by the election of another Member. Officers and Members of the Committee shall be elected by the Members of the Club at an Annual General Meeting, and the names of such Officers and Members of the Committee nominated by the Committee for the ensuing year shall be circulated with the notice convening the Annual General Meeting at least two weeks before the Meeting. Should any Member wish to propose another candidate, the nomination of such, signed by at least two Members, must reach the Secretary at least one clear week before the Annual General Meeting.

(2) Any Member desiring to make a complaint of the manner in which the affairs of the Club are conducted must communicate in writing with the Chairman, who will, if it is considered necessary, call a Committee Meeting to deal with the matter.

(3) If the conduct of any Member or Associate-Member, hereinafter together described as Members, shall be deemed by the Committee to be prejudicial to the interests of the Club, that Member may be requested by the Committee to withdraw from the Club. In the case of refusal, the Member's name may be removed from the list of Members at an Annual General Meeting, provided that, in the notice calling the meeting, intimation of the proposed resolution to remove the Member's name shall have been given to that Member, and a majority of the Members present shall record their votes for such removal.

#### SUBSCRIPTIONS.

(4) Any Member of the British Ornithologists' Union may become a Member of the Club on payment to the Treasurer of an entrance fee of One Pound and a subscription of One Guinea for the current year. Those who are not Members of the British Ornithologists' Union may be admitted to the Club and shall be known as Associate Members. Applications for Associate Membership must be supported in writing by two Members (not being Associate Members), one on personal knowledge, and Associate Members shall be elected by the Committee. The conditions of Associate Membership as to entrance fee, subscription, and otherwise, shall be the same as for Members, save that Associate Members shall not be entitled to vote at any Annual General or other meetings of the Club attended by them, nor be entitled to serve on the Committee, nor receive gratis a copy of the Bulletin of the Club. On signifying their desire, however,

to the Editor they will be provided with one copy of the Bulletin reporting the proceedings of any Meeting at which they are present, at a price not exceeding 2/6d., as the Committee shall from time to time determine. A Member who ceases to be a Member of the British Ornithologists' Union shall also cease to be a full Member of the Club.

Any Member who has resigned less than five years previously may be reinstated without payment of another Entrance Fee at the Committee's discretion.

#### TEMPORARY ASSOCIATES.

(5) Members of the British Ornithologists' Union who are ordinarily resident outside the British Isles, and ornithologists from the British Empire overseas or from foreign countries, may be admitted at the discretion of the Committee, as Temporary Associates of the Club for the duration of any visit to the British Isles not exceeding the current year. An entrance fee of five shillings shall be payable in respect of every such admission if the period exceeds three months. The privileges of Temporary Associates shall be limited to attendance at the ordinary meetings of the Club and the introduction of guests.

#### MEETINGS.

(6) The Club will meet, as a rule, on the third Wednesday in the months of January to June inclusive and October to December inclusive, at such hour and place as may be arranged by the Committee. At these Meetings papers upon ornithological subjects will be read, specimens exhibited and described, and discussion invited.

(7) The Annual General Meeting of the Club shall be held on the day of the April Meeting of each year, and the Treasurer shall present thereat the Balance Sheet and Report; and the election of Officers and Committee, in so far as their election is required, shall be held at such Meeting.

(8) A Special General Meeting may be called at the instance of the Committee for any purpose which they deem to be of sufficient importance, or at the instance of not fewer than fifteen Members. Notice of not less than two weeks shall be given of every Annual General and Special General Meeting.

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS.

(9) Members may introduce visitors at any ordinary Meeting of the Club, but the same guest shall not be eligible to attend on more than three occasions during the year. No former Member who has been removed for any cause, and who has not been reinstated, shall be allowed to attend as a guest.

‘BULLETIN’ OF THE CLUB.

(10) An Abstract of the Proceedings of the Club shall be printed as soon as possible after each Meeting under the title of the ‘Bulletin of the British Ornithologists’ Club’, and one copy shall be distributed gratis to every Member who has paid the current annual subscription.

Contributors are entitled to six free separates of any one article and if they desire to exercise this privilege they should give notice to the Editor when their manuscript is handed in. Separates in excess of the six free copies can be ordered at the same time. These will be supplied by the publishers to whom payment at current rates shall be made on demand.

Descriptions of new birds may be published in the ‘Bulletin’ when such cannot be communicated at the Meeting of the Club. This shall be done at the discretion of the Editor.

(11) No communication, the whole or any important part of which has already been published elsewhere, shall be eligible for publication in the ‘Bulletin’, except at the discretion of the Editor; and no communication made to the Club may be subsequently published elsewhere without the written sanction of the Editor.

ALTERATION AND REPEAL OF RULES.

(12) Any suggested alteration or repeal of a standing rule shall be submitted to Members to be voted upon at the Annual General Meeting, or a Special General Meeting, convened for that purpose.

LIST OF AUTHORS

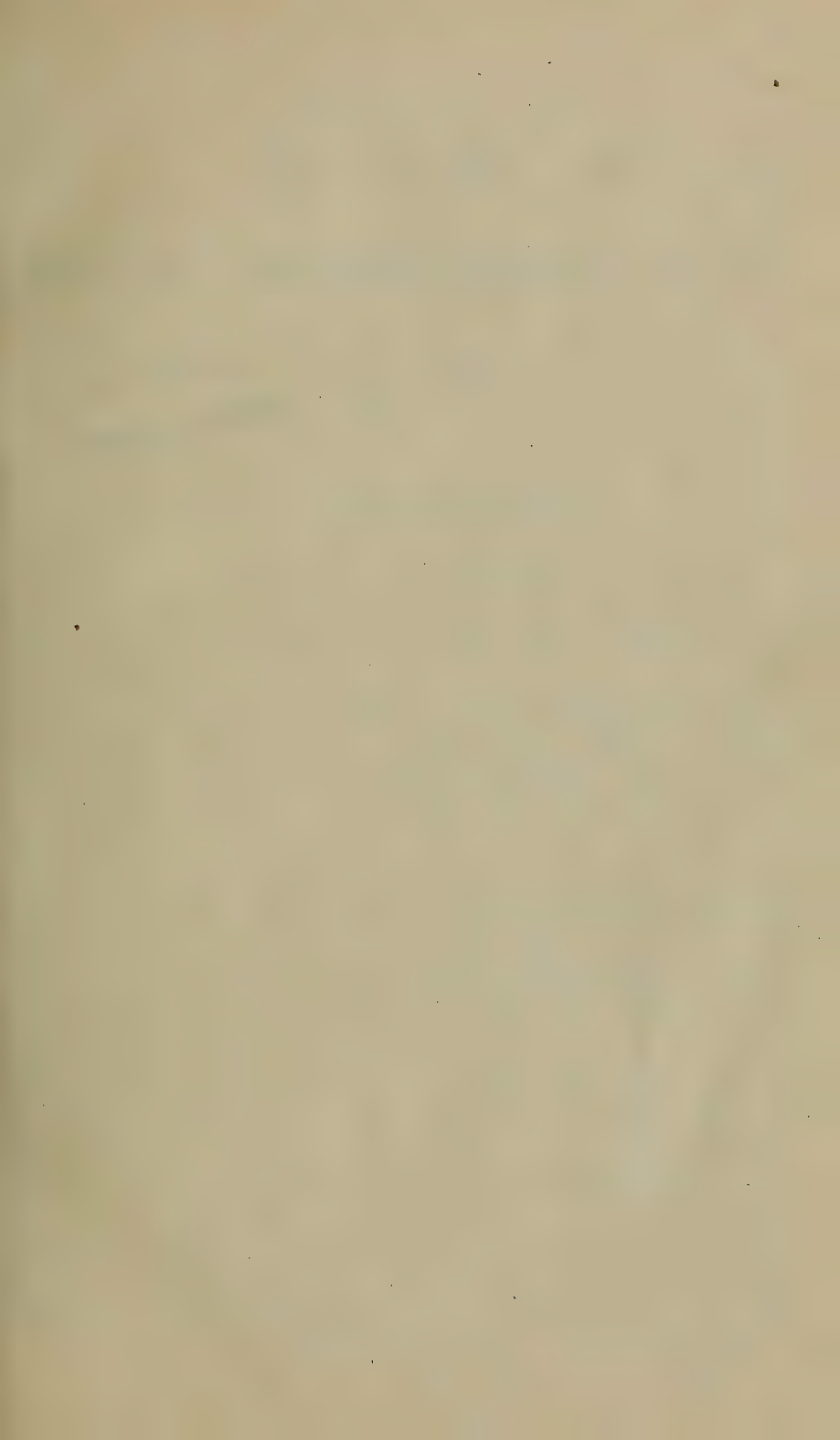
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# BULLETIN

OF THE

## BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB.

Volume 70.

No. 1.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

*Chairman:* Dr. J. M. HARRISON.

This was held at Hotel Rembrandt, Thurloe Place, S.W.7, on Wednesday, 18th January, 1950 at 5.45 p.m.; 34 members were present.

Mr. W. E. Glegg, the Honorary Secretary, read his report. The period is an unusual one, probably unprecedented in the history of the Club, as it covers fifteen months, October 1948 to December 1949. This has been rendered necessary by the changes adopted at the Special General Meeting held on 18th May, 1949. The inequality of the period under consideration renders it more difficult to make comparisons.

During the period of fifteen months twelve monthly meetings have been held, and the aggregate attendances were 311 members and 72 guests, a total of 383, which represents an average of 32 per meeting. The average for the period, 1947-1948, 12 months, was 38. A comparison of the two periods, namely 1947-1948 and 1948-1949, 12 months each, may be made. The attendances for the latter period were 233 members and 48 guests, total 281, giving an average of 31 per meeting. The condition of the membership shows improvement but satisfactory figures, which might be used as a comparison with previous periods, are not ascertainable. The changes, which have been recorded on the list, dated June 1948, are as follows: 25 names have been added and 16 removed, 11 by resignation, 4 by death, and 1 by removal under Rule IV, so that the nett addition to our membership is 9, thus the Club has now a membership of 165. Included in the deaths are the names of Col. Stephenson, R. Clarke, who was the last of our original members, Capt. P. W. Munn and that distinguished ornithologist, Mr. G. M. Mathews, who was so well known to those who attend the Club meetings. Tributes to the valuable services of these regretted members will be found in "The Ibis".

The sale of back numbers of the "Bulletin" has continued with increased vigour. The demand for our journal from almost all over the world demonstrates that our publication has attained a high position in the ornithological world.

The Royal Society is compiling a complete list of the publications of British Scientific Societies. The primary intention is to include the publications of all societies reporting accounts of original work. I have informed the Secretary of the Royal Society that our Club falls within this category and have sent him a specimen of the "Bulletin". The result is that our Club figures in the Royal Society's list.

Under our new Rules only one should be elected to the Committee but Mr. P. A. D. Hollom has resigned thus creating a second vacancy.

Miss E. P. Leach, the Honorary Treasurer reported that the outstanding item of the Accounts for 1949 was the sum realised by the sale of the "Bulletin" (both of back-numbers to members and of copies to non-members) which had been ably organised by the Hon. Secretary. As a result the balance at the Bank stood at £222 as against £110 at the end of the previous Session. The figure shown for the cost of production of the "Bulletin" only represented nine numbers instead of twelve, owing to the fact that the account had not been sent in, but nevertheless a reduction in the cost had been achieved. Various other incidental expenses of the Club remained at approximately the same level as hitherto.

A hearty vote of thanks, proposed from the Chair, was given to Miss Leach for her valuable services during a very difficult period.

It was decided by a majority vote to admit to the Club others than Members of the British Ornithologists' Union; this new class to be known as Associate-Members. The necessary alterations of the Rules to allow of this were also passed.

The result of the Referendum was considered and after much discussion it was decided that this question be referred back to the Committee.

#### ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

*Chairman:* SIR PHILIP MANSON-BAHR; *Vice-Chairman:* COL. R. MEINERTZHAGEN; *Honorary Treasurer:* MR. C. N. WALTER; *Honorary Secretary:*

*Committee:* MR. R. P. DONALDSON and COL. O. E. WYNNE.

It was proposed by Mr. W. E. Glegg and seconded by Dr. Landsborough Thomson and carried with acclamation that a vote of thanks be given to the retiring Chairman, Dr. J. M. Harrison for his services.

## COMMITTEE, 1950.

SIR PHILIP MANSON-BAHR, *Chairman* (elected 1950). COLONEL R. MEINERTZHAGEN, *Vice-Chairman* (elected 1950). Mr. C. N. WALTER, *Honorary Treasurer* (elected 1950). *Honorary Secretary* (Vacant). Capt. C. H. B. GRANT, *Editor*, (elected 1947). Mr. C. T. DALGETY (elected 1948). Lt.-Commdr. C. P. STAPLES (elected 1948). Mr. R. P. DONALDSON (elected 1950). COL. O. E. WYNNE (elected 1950).

## ORDINARY MEETING.

The four-hundred and ninety-first Meeting of the Club was held at the Rembrandt Hotel, Thurloe Place, S.W.7, on Wednesday, 18th January, 1950, following a dinner at 6.30 P.M.

*Chairman:* Col. R. MEINERTZHAGEN.

*Members present:*—Miss C. M. ACLAND; Miss P. BARCLAY-SMITH; F. J. F. BARRINGTON; Major N. A. G. H. BEAL; Major A. BUXTON; Mrs. G. M. CHADWYCK-HEALEY; Miss T. CLAY; R. P. DONALDSON; J. FISHER; W. E. GLEGG; Miss C. E. GODMAN; Miss E. M. GODMAN; Capt. C. H. B. GRANT (*Editor*); B. G. HARRISON; Dr. J. M. HARRISON; P. A. D. HOLLOM; Miss E. P. LEACH; Mrs. P. R. LOWE; J. H. McNEILE; C. W. MACKWORTH-PRAED; Lt.-Col. PAYN; Miss G. M. RHODES; Dr. W. A. RICHARDS; Commdr. A. W. P. ROBERTSON; Major A. G. L. SLADEN; Lt.-Commdr. C. P. STAPLES; Dr. A. LANDSBOROUGH THOMSON; B. W. TUCKER; N. J. WADLEY; C. N. WALTER (*Hon. Treasurer*); A. WILLIAMS; C. DE WORMS; Col. O. E. WYNNE.

*Guests:*—Miss P. BOISSIER; Miss N. J. GRANT; ROLAND GREEN; Mrs. RICHARDS.

Members, 34; Guests, 4; Total, 38.

## An Abnormal Bullfinch.

Lieut.-Colonel W. A. PAYN exhibited this specimen.

A Colour-phase of the Grey-headed Bush-Shrike *Malaconotus blanchoti* Stephens.

Capt C. H. B. GRANT and Mr. C. W. MACKWORTH-PRAED exhibited specimens and remarked:—

This specimen, an adult male, collected by Mr. D. H. A. Bell, in Mpanda district, south-western Tanganyika Territory, on 27th March, 1948, has lost all the yellow and green of the normal bird and has the whole upper side grey,<sup>†</sup> including the wings and tail, the yellow tips of the wing coverts, flight feathers and tail being white, as are the edges to the flight feathers; below white, including the under wing coverts and inner edges of flight feathers; chest-band and sides of chest tawny buff.

<sup>†</sup>The same tone of grey as on the head of a normally coloured specimen.

Colour phases in Shrikes are not unknown and perhaps the outstanding examples are those of *Chlorophoneus nigrifrons* (Reichenow), but as far as we know this is the first record of a colour-phase for *Malaconotus blanchoti*. This specimen has been presented to the National Collection by Mr. Bell.

### A female Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio* Linnaeus, with a male-like tail.

Capt. C. H. B. GRANT and Mr. C. W. MACKWORTH-PRAED exhibited specimens and remarked:—

This specimen, an adult female, collected by Mr. D. H. A. Bell at Kalya, south-western Tanganyika Territory on 10th November, 1948, has a male-like pattern in the tail, the left side showing sharper and clearer markings than the right side. Some of the upper tail coverts are grey.

The Handbook of British Birds, I, p. 295, 1938, mentions that females sometimes have a grey crown, blackish lores, and ear-coverts.

This specimen has been presented to the National Collection by Mr. Bell.

### Gradation of Variation of Eggs of the Argentine Cow-Bird.

Mr. WILLIAM E. GLEGG read the following:—

Before touching on the subject of the communication it may be well to introduce the bird. The Argentine Cow-Bird (*Molothrus bonariensis bonariensis*) has a total length of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches; the male is uniform shining purplish black while the female is dark ashy brown and slightly smaller. English speaking Argentines call it "Blackbird". It is widely distributed in South America and extends into Patagonia. The males are much more numerous than the females. One writer claims that nine out of every ten are males. The reason advanced for this is that the male eggs of the Cow-Bird are harder shelled than the female eggs, escaping destruction when the parent exercises its destructive habit of picking holes in all the eggs in the nests, to which it intrudes. The Cow-Birds are gregarious, the parties not breaking up during the laying season. They are parasitical and the female steals away to drop her egg in any nest she can find, returning to the flock. They follow domestic cattle and frequently a dozen or more may be seen perched on the back of a cow or horse. At the end of the summer they congregate in flocks of tens of thousands, so that the ground where they are feeding seems carpeted with black and the trees where they alight appear to have black foliage. They are migratory but only partially, varying greatly from year to year. Cow-Birds have some strange habits. They frequently waste their eggs by dropping them on the ground; they occasionally lay in old forsaken nests; they frequently lay in nests where incubation has commenced; one female often lays several eggs in the same nest; several females often lay in one nest, so that the number of eggs in it frequently makes incubation

impossible. W. H. Hudson, whom I quote, collected ten nests of the Scissor-Tail (*Milvulus tyrannus*), which contained 47 eggs in all, 12 of the Scissor-Tails and 35 of the Cow-Birds. They, both male and female, destroy many of the eggs in the nests they visit by pecking holes in the shells, breaking, devouring, and stealing them. In some nests found full of parasitical eggs, all have holes pecked in the shells for the bird destroys indiscriminately eggs of its own and other species. In spite of the fact that the Cow-Bird is so prodigal with its own substance, it is said to maintain its status and even increase. It is stated that every female lays from 60-100 eggs every season.

It is probable that the eggs of no species of birds are free from variation. As is well known the variation of the eggs of some species is of an extraordinary nature, as an example the eggs of the Tree-Pipit (*Anthus trivialis*) may be cited. My exhibit has been chosen to demonstrate not the remarkable variation, although this exists, but the remarkable gradation of the variation of the colour of the eggs of the Cow-Bird between two given points. Fortunately a good series of eggs is available to demonstrate the gradual change of the variation. From what appears to be pure white the colour changes gradually until the eggs at the other end are deeply erythristic. Hudson writes that about half or nearly half of the eggs are pure unspotted white and it will be seen that the series exhibited, chosen at random, supports this statement. It will be noticed in the sixth row of the white eggs, how the variation from white commences. Venturi, the collector of the eggs, declares that the size of the coloured eggs is fairly constant while the white eggs vary from  $22 \times 17$  to  $25 \times 21$  mm. and he adds that the white eggs are generally smaller than the others. I weighed twenty of the monochromatic white eggs and found them 7.33 grammes, while twenty of the most heavily pigmented eggs weighed 7.48 grammes. For white the lightest egg, was 244mg., the heaviest 452mg., and for the heavily pigmented eggs the lightest was 301 and the heaviest 454mg. The white eggs averaged 366mg. and the pigmented 374mg. These figures to some extent confirm Venturi's claim. The series of eggs, which I exhibit, were taken in the Argentine.

#### Works quoted.

- 1888.—Argentine Ornithology. P. L. Slater and W. H. Hudson, vol. I, p. 72.  
 1909.—Notes sur les Oiseaux de la République Argentine. E. Hartert et S. Venturi, Novitates Zoologicæ, vol. 16, p. 184.

### Selection of fosterers by Cow Birds.

Mr. GUY HARRISON remarked:—

Following Mr. Glegg's paper on the habits of the Argentine Cow-Bird I would say that one of the most interesting aspects arising from these habits was the factor which determined the selection of a fosterer for the hatching of its eggs. Over 100 different species had been recorded which had been victimised in this way and both insectivorous and grain eating birds seemed equally acceptable. This Cow-Bird

*Molothrus b. bonariensis* (Gmelin) appeared also to have very catholic tastes in the actual choice of nests and the speaker had found both a nest of the Gnatcatcher, *Poliophtila dumicola* (Vieillot), which measures little over  $2 \times 2$  inches in external dimensions, and a nest of the Lenatero, *Anumbius acuticaudatus* (Lesson) which measures  $12 \times 24$  inches which had each been victimised by *Molothrus b. bonariensis*.

The Argentine Cow-Bird, however, never seemed to victimise non-Passerine species and it appeared remarkable that nest of the Picui Dove, *Columbula picui* (Temminck) was never victimised although its nests were common and conspicuous and the eggs both in size and appearance approximated very closely to the white variety of the Cow-Bird egg. He had never seen any explanation of the restricted selection by this Cow-Bird of Passerine nests only, but it seemed to him very probable that this bird required a cup shaped nest or one possessing a small entrance hole to stimulate its egg laying functions.

Another interesting question regarding the Argentine Cow-Bird was the number of eggs which it laid normally. W. H. Hudson had suggested the amazing figure of sixty to one hundred eggs in a season. Herbert Friedmann whose comprehensive work on the Cow-Bird was so well-known, was unable to accept this figure and suggested that the number should be from six to ten. Whilst paying a tribute to the extreme accuracy of the observations of the latter writer, the speaker felt that Friedmann's estimate was too low, and that in many districts an average of fifteen eggs per bird would be a moderate estimate. In the St. Lucia district of Uruguay where he had worked, almost every non-Passerine nest in a conspicuous position was victimised by one or more Cow-Birds eggs, and although the birds themselves were numerous and conspicuous it seemed to be impossible to account for the number of eggs found on any lower average figure than fifteen.

The speaker showed eggs of *Molothrus b. bonariensis* together with the eggs of certain of the rarer fosterers with which they had been found. Amongst the latter were the Red Thorn bird *Phacellodomus ruber*, (Vieillot) and the Lenatero, *Anumbius acuticaudatus* neither of which he believed had been recorded previously.

He also showed a set of the eggs of the Gnatcatcher, *Poliophila dumicola* which W. H. Hudson had claimed to have been victimised but about which Friedmann says his record is not very acceptable and may be considered doubtful. The speaker found a Cow-Bird's egg resting on three eggs of this fosterer, one of which had been broken, and the Cow-Bird's egg completely filled the cup of this tiny nest. He also showed a Cow-Bird's egg with those of the Baywinged Cow-Bird *Agelaioides badius* (Vieillot) with the Misto Yellow Finch *Sycalis arvensis* (Kittlitz), and with the Bienteveo Tyrant *Pitangus s. bolivianus* (Lafresnaye). All three of these birds are reputed to be rare fosterers but in the case of the Bienteveo Tyrant the speaker said that he had found a substantial number of victimised nests in Southern Uruguay.

He also showed a series of eggs of the race *Molothrus b. melanogyna* Sztolcman, taken in Brazil and pointed out that the difference between the eggs of this race and of *Molothrus b. bonariensis* seemed to be greater than the difference in the appearance of the birds themselves. In the district in Brazil which he had visited the eggs of *Molothrus b. melanogyna* were usually of the greenish type and white eggs were by no means common. He also showed two eggs of *Molothrus b. minimus* Dalmas which he had found in Tobago with eggs of the Trinidad Wren *Troglodytes clarus* Balepsch and Hartert, and which showed the small size of the eggs of this race.

## Remarks upon the "Mottled" variety of the Rook, *Corvus frugilegus frugilegus* Linnaeus.

Dr. J. M. HARRISON remarked:—

At the November Meeting I exhibited an unusual variety of the Rook, (*Corvus frugilegus frugilegus* Linnaeus, *antea*, 69, pp., 118, 119). Certain additional information has since come to my notice, and I am therefore amplifying my previous communication.

Mons. Noël Mayaud has written informing me that a similar variety is known in France, as a rarity, while I have also recently seen the plate, of one such example from France, published in the *Faune de Maine et Loire*, pp. 1, 3 and pp. 353, 354, by P. A. Millet, in Paris in 1828. Millet's description runs as follows:—"Var.B Extrémeté des rectrices, des couvatures supérieures et inférieures de la queue, ainsi que des remiges, des grandes, moyennes et petites couvatures des ailes, d'un cendré foncé; le reste comme dans le type de l'espèce. 'Très-rare.Mon cab.'"

This specimen is of interest in several respects, firstly the bird is apparently at least two years old, for it has bare skin at the base of the bill. From the above information it is evident that this variety has been known for over 120 years, but it is my opinion that the character is probably of far greater antiquity. It is also of interest to note that, from the details shown in the plate done by Millet, not only can the aberration occur in the adult, but that the condition actually seems to become accentuated with age, for the greyish-white tips to the feathers are much more extensive in this bird than they are in those specimens, all young birds, which I have examined personally. In this connection it is worth mentioning that I have myself observed the case of a pied Blackbird, *Turdus merula merula* Linnaeus, becoming increasingly more pie-bald with the passage of time. The extent to which such accentuation of an aberrant character can proceed is of some interest, and is a point worthy of further observation by anyone who may possibly be able to keep such an individual under observation over a number of years.

Note by Mr. A. Williams.

There is also a plate of a mottled rook in Hancock's *Birds of Northumberland*.

## On the systematics of *Phalacrocorax africanus* Gmelin.

Colonel R. MEINERTZHAGEN sent the following note:—

*P. a. africanus* (Gmelin). 1789. River Nile in Egypt.

syns: *P. a. menegauxi* Millet-Horsin. 1921. Togo.

*P. a. africanoides* A. Smith. 1836. New Latakoo. S. Africa.

Revived by Roberts for the S. African race.

In breeding plumage has a line of whitish hairs behind the eye and few decomposed feathers flecking the head and neck. Wing coverts pearl-grey with broad black tips. Tail longer. Forehead feathers elongated. The immature bird is whitish below.

*Distribution.*—The whole of the inland waters of Africa from Egypt to the Cape.

*P. a. pictilis* Bangs. 1918. Madagascar.

*Distribution.*—On both salt and fresh water in Madagascar.

*P. a. coronatus* (Wahlberg) 1857. Possession Island, South West Africa.

Peters, Check List Birds of World 1, p. 93, omits this race, presumably as he considered it a synonym of *P. a. africanus*. Selater, Syst. Av. Æthiop., p. 21, also omits any reference to this race. Roberts, Bds. S. Africa, p. 18, treats it as a separate species. See also Roberts, Ann. Transv. Mus. 8, p. 205, 1922.

Very similar in breeding plumage to *P. a. africanus* but the tail is slightly shorter, the forehead feathers are slightly more elongated to form a crest and the sides of head and neck are thinly flecked. Wing coverts and scapulars are darker, a bronze grey, with narrower black tips. Immature birds are browner below. I can see no reason for not treating this salt-water Cormorant as conspecific with its fresh water relative, though it is interesting that the Madagascar race lives on both salt and fresh water without showing differences.

*Distribution.*—The coasts of South Africa from Benguella in the north to at least East London and perhaps Port Elizabeth where I have seen a small Cormorant, probably this race.

See also Grant & Præd, Bull. B.O.C., p. 209, 1933 and Ibis, p. 747, 1933; White, Ibis, p. 280, 1949; and Vincent, Ibis, p. 81, 1945.

## On the genera *Athene* Boie 1822 (genotype *Athene noctua* (Scopoli) and *Speotyto* Gloger 1842 (genotype *Strix cunicularia* Molina).

Colonel R. MEINERTZHAGEN sent the following note:—

Ever since I kept the American Burrowing Owl in captivity alongside the European Little Owl, I have been much struck by their close resemblance, not only in plumage pattern, but in habit. An even closer resemblance is seen between the former and the Indian *Athene brama* (Temminck) which is barred below. I am well acquainted with all these three Little Owls in the field. Both *A. brama* and

*A. noctua* are known to breed underground, sometimes in association with snakes and rodents.

The differences between the two genera are that in *Cunicularia* the tarsus is less feathered, though hairs extend to the end of the toes and the back of the tarsus is almost devoid of hairs. In some races of *Athene noctua* the hairs on the toes are exactly as in *Cunicularia* but the back of the tarsus is always feathered, sometimes scantily. There is nothing in the length of the tarsus.

In *Cunicularia* the notching on the outer web of the fifth primary is absent, but sometimes slightly suggested, whereas in *Athene* the fifth primary is usually distinctly notched but sometimes scarcely perceptibly.

In both genera the nostrils are swollen in a fresh state but the nostril aperture is slightly differently placed in *Cunicularia* to what it is in *Athene*.

I cannot help feeling that *Cunicularia* is maintained partly on account of continental isolation but also for its rather pleasing association with rattle-snakes and rodents. Its name "burrowing" may well also contribute to separation; but I have seen both *A. brama* and *A. noctua* excavating with vigour in earth and the rarest snake I ever collected (*Walterinnesia*) was secured from a burrow in which a pair of *Athene noctua glaux* were nesting in Egypt.

I therefore consider Nature is better reflected in systematics by placing *Cunicularia* as a synonym of *Athene*.

## On *Oenanthe tractrac* (Wilkes) and *Oenanthe albicans* (Wahlberg) and the development of the 'sickle wing'.

Colonel R. MEINERTZHAGEN sent the following note:—

During a recent visit to Namaqualand I became closely acquainted with three Chats—*O. tractrac*, *O. albicans* and *O. tractrac barlowi*.

*Oenanthe tractrac tractrac* (Wilkes). 1817. Orange River. Named after Levaillant's plate 184, an excellent representation of the bird. The name "tractrac" is Levaillant's rendering of the bird's call note. The type locality can be restricted to Bushman Flats south of the Orange River where the species is common.

The darkest race. The tip of the second primary is slightly less rounded than in *O. t. albicans* (fig. 4) and in six cases out of eighteen examined the tip is strongly attenuated (fig. 5).

This race only occurs in the dry karroo country of Great and Little Namaqualand, both north and south of the Orange River, east to Deelfontein, Middelburg and Aliwal North and never occurs far from bush country. In behaviour I could detect little difference from the usual wing and tail movement normally associated with other members of the genus *Oenanthe*.

*Oenanthe tractrac barlowi* (Roberts) 1937. Aus, South West Africa. Described as a race of *Oenanthe tractrac*.

In colour, closely resembling *O. t. albicans*, but a shade darker and with the tip of the second primary with a slightly developed

attenuated tip (fig. 3), very much as in some examples of *O. a. albicans*.

Not too common round Aus, Luderitz and on the borders of the southern Namib.

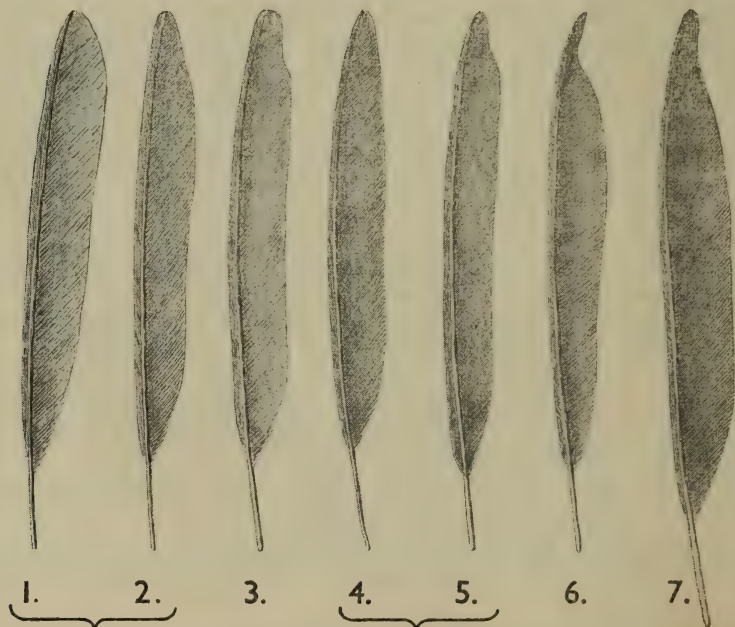
*Ænanthe t. albicans* (Wahlberg). 1855. Walvis Bay.

The palest race and confined to the absolute desert from Cape Cross in the north to an undefined area south of Walvis Bay but not reaching to within twenty miles north of Luderitz.

The tip of the second primary is rounded and without attenuation in fifteen specimens examined (fig. 1) and has slight attenuation in five cases and marked attenuation (fig. 2) in one case.

It is clear that the attenuation of the tip of the second primary is not a generic character, not even a specific character in the genus *Ænanthe*. In which case the genera *Karrucinclla* Roberts and *Emarginata* Shelley must be placed as synonyms of *Ænanthe*. *Emarginata* exemplifies the extreme form of attenuation (fig. 6). The tip of the second primary of *Karrucinclla schlegeli* (Wahlberg) is also shown (fig. 7).

The biological significance of this attenuated second primary is not clear. It apparently has no connection with sex or age. It probably has some connection with courtship, but if used for sound, I can find no record of such a use. *Ænanthe sinuata* (Suudevall) is a persistent wing-flicker, more so than is usual in *Ænanthe* and more closely resembling the wing and tail movements of *Cercomela*. But the slow deliberate flicking could not produce sound. In flight, the attenuated tip of the second primary is not apparent.



1. *O. ALBICANS.*

2. *O. BARLOWI.*

3.

4. *O. TRACTRAC.*

5.

6. *O. SINUATA.*

7. *O. SCHLEGELI.*

## Notices.

### STOCK OF THE "BULLETIN".

It is proposed to reduce the stock of the "Bulletin", but before this is done members are given an opportunity to acquire parts at 2/6 each. Applications should be made to W. E. Glegg, Esq., Zoological Museum, Tring, Herts. No reply will be sent if parts are not available.

### PUBLICATION OF THE "BULLETIN".

Members who make a contribution at a Meeting should hand the M.S. to the Editor at that Meeting. As the proofs will be corrected by the Editor, it is essential that the M.S. should be correct and either typed or written very clearly with scientific and place names in block letters. The first mention of a scientific name should be spelt out in full, i.e., genus, specific name, racial name, (if any) and author. Any further mention of the same name need only have the initial letter of the genus and no further mention of the author.

If no M.S. is handed to the Editor at the Meeting, a note will be inserted mentioning the contribution.

### DINNERS AND MEETINGS FOR 1950.

18 January; 15 February; 22 March\*; 19 April; 17 May; 21 June; 18 October; 15 November; 20 December.

\*The March meeting is on the fourth Wednesday of the month, not the third Wednesday, and will be held at the Zoological Society of London. The Dinner preceding this Meeting is in conjunction with the British Ornithologists Union.

### ADDRESS OF TREASURER.

Members are reminded that the annual subscription of £1 1s. 0d. was due on 1st January, 1950.

Remittances should be sent to the new Hon. Treasurer:—

C. N. WALTER, Esq.,

290, Finsbury Pavement House,

Moorgate, London, E.C.2.

### NEXT MEETING.

The next Meeting of the Club will take place on Wednesday, 15th February, 1950, at the Rembrandt Hotel, Thurloe Place, S.W.7, preceded by a Dinner at 6.30 P.M.

# BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT for the Period to 31st December, 1949

<i>Comparative Figures</i> 1st September, 1948.		<i>Comparative Figures</i> 1st September, 1948.	
£	s. d.	£	s. d.
194	178 8 7	255	178 8 7
1	26 7 11	36	26 7 11
400	14 14 0	6	14 14 0
256	17 10 0	13	17 10 0
100	10 10 0	10	10 10 0
951	23 16 3	22	23 16 3
17	271 6 9	342	271 6 9
174	223 4 7	110	223 4 7
40	400 0 0	1	400 0 0
15	255 13 4	400	255 13 4
—	100 0 0	256	100 0 0
12	978 17 11	100	978 17 11
£1,209	£1,250 4 8	£1,209	£1,250 4 8
To BALANCE, 1st September, 1948—		BY Publication of "Bulletin,"	
Cash at Bank Current A/c. ..	110 3 7	Distribution of "Bulletin" and Print-	
500 National Savings Certificates at	1 3 7	ing, etc. ....	
Cost (Held by Bank)	400 0 0	Compiling Index and List of Authors to	
£256 14s. 1d. 3½% War Stock at Cost	255 13 4	"Bulletin," Vol. 68 and 1-9 of Vol. 69	
£100 3% Savings Bonds, 1960/70, at	100 0 0	Hire of Lantern, etc. at Meetings ..	
Cost .. ..	100 0 0	ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON—	
		Contribution towards cost of "Zoo-	
		logical Record" .. ..	
ENTRANCE FEES—	867 0 6	Miscellaneous Expenditure, including	
21 Members at £1 ..	£21 0 0	Audit Fee, Printing, Stationery and	
1 Member at £1 1s. 0d.	1 1 0	Postage .. ..	
SUBSCRIPTIONS—	22 1 0		
167 Members at £1 1s. 0d.	175 7 0	BALANCE—31st December, 1949—	
1 Member at £1 5s. 0d.	1 5 0	Cash at Bank, Current .. ..	
1 Member at £1 19s. 0d.	1 19 0	A/c. .. ..	
5 Members in advance	5 5 0	Cash in Hands of .. ..	
1 Member in arrear	1 1 0	Treasurer .. ..	
SALES OF "BULLETIN"	184 17 10	500 National Savings Certificates at	
SALES BACK NUMBERS,	40 13 11	Cost (Held by Bank) .. ..	
ex Stock .. ..	112 7 9	£256 14s. 1d. 3½% War Stock at Cost	
DONATIONS & MISCELLANEOUS INCOME	153 1 8	£100 3% Savings Bonds, 1960/70,	
INTEREST ON INVESTMENTS—	5 5 0	at Cost .. ..	
3½% War Stock .. ..	13 9 6		
3% Savings Bonds 1960/70	4 10 0		
	17 19 6		
	383 4 2		
	£1,250 4 8		

E. P. LEACH, Hon. Treasurer.

We have examined the foregoing Account with the Books and Vouchers of the Club for the Period from 1st September 1948, to 31st December 1949, and certify it to be in accordance therewith. We have also verified the Cash at Bank and in the hands of the Treasurer and the Securities.

W. B. KEEN & CO.,  
Chartered Accountants.

FINSBURY CIRCUS HOUSE,  
BLONFIELD STREET, LONDON, E.C.2,  
January 18th, 1950.

# BULLETIN

OF THE

## BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB.

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Volume 70.  
No. 2.

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### SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING.

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*Chairman* : COLONEL R. MEINERTZHAGEN.

This was held at the Rembrandt Hotel, Thurloe Place, S.W.7, on Wednesday, 15th February, 1950 at 5.45 p.m.; 39 members were present.

#### ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

*Honorary Secretary* : Miss G. M. RHODES.

#### DINING PLACE.

It was decided to continue the Dinners and Meetings at the Rembrandt Hotel, the Management of this Hotel having agreed to reduce the cost of the Dinner.

#### ALTERATION OF RULES.

"Title and Objects" Clause was altered to add "and others interested in ornithology."

Rule 3 was amended by inserting in line 1 after the word "Member" the words "or Associate Member, hereafter together described as Members."

Rule 4 was amended to read: "Any Member of the British Ornithologists' Union may become a Member of the Club on payment to the Honorary Treasurer of an entrance fee of One Pound and a subscription of One Guinea for the current year. Those who are not Members of the British Ornithologists' Union may be admitted to the Club and shall be known as Associate Members. Applications for Associate Membership must be supported in writing by two Members (not being Associate Members) one on personal knowledge, and shall be elected by the

Committee. The conditions of Associate Membership as to entrance fee, subscription and otherwise, shall be the same as for Members save that Associate Members shall not be entitled to vote at any General or other Meetings of the Club attended by them, nor be entitled to serve on the Committee, nor receive gratis a copy of the *Bulletin* of the Club. On signifying their desire, however, to the Editor they will be provided with one copy of the *Bulletin* reporting the Proceedings of any Meeting at which they are present, at a price, not exceeding 2/6, as the Committee shall from time to time determine. A Member, who ceases to be a Member of the British Ornithologists' Union, shall also cease to be a full member of the Club.

### ORDINARY MEETING.

The four-hundred and ninety-second Meeting of the Club was held at the Rembrandt Hotel, Thurloe Place, S.W.7, on Wednesday, 15th February, 1950, following a dinner at 6.30 P.M.

*Chairman* : Col. R. MEINERTZHAGEN.

*Members present* :—Miss C. ACLAND ; Dr. D. A. BANNERMAN ; Major N. A. G. H. BEAL ; G. BESEK ; Mrs. BOYD WATT ; Mrs. G. M. CHADWYCK-HEALEY ; Miss T. CLAY ; C. DE WORMS ; C. T. DALGETY ; R. P. DONALDSON ; J. FERGUSON LEES ; Miss J. M. FERRIER ; R. S. FITTER ; W. E. GLEGG ; Miss C. GODMAN ; Miss E. M. GODMAN ; Capt. C. H. B. GRANT (*Editor*) ; Dr. J. M. HARRISON ; P. A. D. HOLLOM ; K. P. KEYWOOD ; Dr. A. LANDSBOROUGH-THOMSON ; Miss E. P. LEACH ; Miss C. LONGFIELD ; Dr. G. CARMICHAEL LOW ; Mrs. PERCY LOWE ; J. M. McNEILL ; Mrs. PHIPPS ; C. W. MACKWORTH PRAED ; Dr. W. A. RICHARDS ; BRIAN ROBERTS ; Miss G. M. RHODES (*Hon. Secretary*) ; PETER SCOTT ; D. SETH-SMITH ; MAJOR SIMMONDS ; MAJOR A. G. L. SLADEN ; Lt.-Commdr. C. P. STAPLES ; B. W. TUCKER ; N. J. WADLEY ; C. N. WALTER (*Hon. Treasurer*) ; A. WILLIAMS ; Col. O. E. WYNNE.

*Guests* :—Miss B. BANNERMAN ; Dr. HUDSON ; Miss D. OLDERSON ; Dr. PALMER ; Mrs. L. PALMER ; Miss P. TALBOT-PONSONBY ; Mr. RICHARDS ; Mrs. W. A. RICHARDS ; Miss V. RICHARDS ; D. J. SIMMONDS ; Mrs. STAPLES ; Mrs. OLIVER STEEL ; Mrs. N. F. THOMAS ; Mrs. WADLEY ; Mrs. C. N. WALTER ; Mrs. A. WILLIAMS.

Members, 43 ; Guests, 16 ; Total, 59.

## New races of the Cape Bunting from Southern Rhodesia and Basutoland.

Mr. Jack Vincent sent the following descriptions and specimens for exhibition :—

FRINGILLARIA CAPENSIS BASUTOENSIS, new race.

*Description*.—Greyer than any other South African race below, and owing to the lack of rufous coloration above appears generally darker than other races. Compared with *F. c. reidi* Shelley, the Basutoland birds are

predominantly grey rather than sandy. Unlike *F. c. reidi* they are not generally rufous below but very grey indeed, particularly on the chest and breast. The pale rusty hue of *F. c. reidi* appears only on the abdomen and there mainly towards its centre.

*Distribution*.—High mountain areas (the Quathlamba-Drakensberg) of southern, central, and eastern Basutoland.

*Type*.—In the British Museum. Adult Male. Collected by Jack Vincent at the source of the Lekhalabaletsi river, Basutoland, 29° 18' S.—29° 25.5' E., at 9,600 feet, 25 July, 1949. Collector's No. 2531. Brit. Mus. Reg. No. 1950.12.2.

*Measurements of Type*.—Wing 83.5, exposed culmen 10, culmen from base 15, tail 69, tarsus 22, total length in flesh 161 mm.

FRINGILLARIA CAPENSIS PLOWESI, new race.

*Description*.—On the upper side most like nominate *F. capensis* (Linnaeus) at the other end of the cline, that is to say generally paler than all other races, but with a prominent striped pattern caused by the broad dark centres to the feathers. It differs completely from the nearby *F. c. limpopoensis* in lacking almost all rufous coloration, and in being only slightly sandy. Below it is paler than any race hitherto known, and again perhaps most like nominate *F. capensis*, although even paler than that race, and quite white in appearance. The throat is clear white, the breast greyish, and the abdomen no darker than creamy-white.

*Distribution*.—Southern Rhodesia—so far recorded only from the Matopos Hills area, near Bulawayo.

*Type*.—In the British Museum. Adult male. Collected by D. C. H. Plowes (as a compliment to whom this race is named) at the Matopos Research Station, near Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia, at *circa* 4,600 feet, 24 April, 1949. Brit. Mus. Reg. No. 1950.12.1.

*Measurements of Type*.—Wing 77, exposed culmen 10.5, culmen from base 16, tail 62, tarsus 18 mm.

*Remarks* :—In order to determine the identity of some unusually dark Cape Buntings collected by myself on the high mountains of Basutoland, and of some unusually pale ones kindly collected at my request by Mr D. C. H. Plowes in the Matopos hills near Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia, I have examined the material in the Transvaal Museum. I find that both the series mentioned, each of five birds, are so unlike anything hitherto obtained as to be worthy of description.

So far as the Basutoland birds are concerned, it is evident that they represent a distinct montane form. The Southern Rhodesian examples are interesting in that they partly fill the large gap in the distribution of the species between *F. c. vincenti* Lowe, Zobué, Portuguese East Africa-Nyasaland border and *F. c. limpopoensis* Roberts, Pretoria. It is also noteworthy that the Rhodesian birds are strangely white in coloration below, and bear no resemblance either to the rufous *F. c. limpopoensis* to

the south, or to the pure grey *F. c. vincenti* to the north. The gaps that now remain are still some 400 and 600 miles respectively south and north of the Matabeleland birds.

I also had occasion to examine specimens of the same species from South-western Africa in the Transvaal Museum, and find that I cannot agree with the distributions found in Robert's "Birds of S. Africa" 1940. From the material available I am quite unable to discriminate in any way between *F. c. ausensis* and *F. c. karasensis* Roberts; Aus, and Great Karas Mountains, S.W. Africa respectively. It was also noted that although examples of *F. c. bradfieldi* Roberts, Ann. Tvl. Mus. 12, 1928, p. 318: Waterberg, are in the main perhaps a little more rufous, some examples of *F. c. ausensis* are extremely difficult to distinguish from them, and one bird from Waterberg in the north of the range of the three races is even precisely like the type of *F. c. karasensis* described from an area to the south of *F. c. ausensis*.

So far as the birds from the Transvaal are concerned they are similar to *F. c. reidi* Shelley: Ingagane River, Newcastle, Natal, below, but taken by and large they show a more rufous tinge above. I consider that *F. c. limpopoensis* should be recognized, and that the present arrangement of the races is as follows:—

*Fringillaria capensis capensis*.—South-western Cape Province (Swellendam and Bredasdorp districts, west and north-west to the Olifants River).

*F. c. klaverensis* Roberts.—Little Namaqualand (Olifants to the Orange Rivers; examples from along the latter river—from Augrabies and Goodhouse show intergradation with *F. c. ausensis*).

*F. c. ausensis*.—Great Namaqualand (Orange River, northward to Seeheim, Aus and Windhoek; birds from the latter area are intermediate with *F. c. bradfieldi*).

*F. c. bradfieldi*.—Damaraland (Eronga Mts. and Waterberg areas).

*F. c. media* Sharpe.—Karoo and eastern districts of the Cape Province to the O.F.S., Griqualand West, and southern Bechuanaland. (Intergradation is evident with *F. c. basutoensis* in East Griqualand—at Matatiele—as well as at the lower altitudes in western Basutoland—at Teyateyaneng; and with *F. c. limpopoensis* on the north-west—at Vryburg and Gaberones).

*F. c. basutoensis*.—High mountain areas (the Quathlamba-Drakensberg) of southern, central, and eastern Basutoland.

*F. c. reidi*.—Highveld areas of Northern Natal, southern and south-eastern Transvaal (Newcastle, Wakkerstroom, and Belfast).

*F. c. limpopoensis*.—Central, south-western, and western Transvaal (Modderfontein to Pretoria and Rustenburg; and known to extend north to the Zoutpansberg).

*F. c. plowesi*.—Southern Rhodesia (so far recorded only from the Matopos Hills area of Matabeleland, near Bulawayo).

*F. c. vincenti*.—Nyasaland and Northern Portuguese East Africa (Kirk Mts. of the Tete Province of Portuguese East Africa, and southern Nyasaland as far north as the Kota-Kota district; also known from Mirrote in the Mozambique Province of northern Portuguese East Africa.

### On a race of the *Larus argentatus-fuscus* group new to the British Isles.

Colonel R. MEINERTZHAGEN exhibited a specimen and remarked:—

Yellow-legged Herring Gulls with mantles slightly darker than the British Herring Gull have frequently been reported in winter from the east coasts of Scotland and England but none had been obtained until last November when I saw three at St. Andrews, sitting together on the shore and not mixing with large parties of the British Herring Gull. I shot a specimen on November 19th, 1949, a male, wing 447 mm., tarsus 69 mm., culmen from feathers 59 mm. Colour of bill, Dull yellowish white, gonys red, tip greenish-yellow. Colour of legs, pale ivory flesh-white. Eyes, stone grey.

I think, without doubt, it is *Larus argentatus heuglini* Bree.

Bree (B. Europe, 2nd ed. 5. p. 58 1876) described this species from the coast of Somaliland, a winter bird and gives an excellent plate. Except, in the colour of the legs which are yellow according to Bree, my bird agrees very well with this plate. Bree's type, also a male, had a wing of 419 mm., culmen from feathers 51 mm. and tarsus 63 mm.

Saunders, Cat. Birds, B.M. 25. p. 255, describes this race under *Larus affinis* of Reinhardt 1853, the type of which is in the Copenhagen Museum and turns out to be *Larus a. argentatus*. Iredale, Bull. B.O.C., 31, p. 69, 1913 gives a name to Saunders' description, calling it *Larus fuscus antelius*, the type of which is in the British Museum and the type locality the River Ob in Western Siberia.

I have compared my St. Andrews bird with Iredale's type of *L. antelius* and taking into consideration that mine is a winter bird and Iredale's type is a summer bird, they agree well enough.

Both Hartert and Dwight considered *L. heuglini* a synonym of *Larus cacchinnans*: and *L. antelius* a synonym of *L. taimyrensis*. Stegmann regards *L. antelius* as a valid race, but throughout his paper (J.f.O. 1934) does not mention *L. heuglini*.

Comparing Stegmann's description with Bree's, I think there is little doubt than *L. antelius* and *L. heuglini* are the same bird.

The discrepancy in the colour of the legs of my St. Andrews bird and the definite "yellow" of Bree and Stegmann, can I think, be accounted for by the fact that though it is in adult plumage the soft parts may not yet have assumed adult colour, or the bird may have been in bad health or it may be due to diet which affects the soft parts. See also Glegg, Ibis pp. 92-95, 1943.

I am greatly indebted to Capt. Grant for much help in this identification.

## Expedition to the breeding ground of Ross's Goose.

MR. PETER SCOTT gave an excellent account of his expedition and showed some very beautiful films of the country and the fauna and flora, which were much appreciated by the Members present.

## On the "Mottled" Variety of the Rook.

MR. NÖEL MAYARD sent the following note :—

Dr. J. M. Harrison kindly lent me a photograph of a "mottled" variety of the Rook, *Corvus frugilegus* Linnæus, similar to the specimen exhibited by him at the November 1949 Meeting of the Club.

It appears to me that the whitish bar on each feather is not exactly apical, but sub-terminal, although the dark end is much restricted.

Two specimens of the Rook in French collections exhibit such light bars on the feathers in an analogous way but not similar. The first is a juvenile in the Paris Museum—"La Fère-en-Tardenois, C.G., 1931, No. 738." The whole plumage is black-brown, each feather with a light-grey subterminal bar (the crown excepted, where the feathers are grey on the bases and black at the end, the grey being not apparent). On the secondaries and tail-feathers the light bar is almost apical. This bird was commencing its juvenile-moult, and the new generation of feathers is black without any light bars.

The second specimen is in the Museum at Nantes—"Les Sables d'Olonne (Don du Petit Séminaire des Sables. Col. Rouillé). It is a bird in its first year with juvenile wing and tail-feathers. All its renewed feathers during the juvenile moult are wholly black. The juvenile feathers which are retained are :—alula, primaries, secondaries, primary-coverts, all the greater coverts and one of the median secondary-coverts towards the outside of the left wing, the two outermost on the right, and also the tail feathers. All these juvenile feathers have a light end, a subterminal dark-bar, then a light bar, and the rest of the basal part blackish or black. On the longest primary the aberrant apical zone extends for 20 mm., on the greater coverts for about 15 to 20 mm., on the tail-feathers for 10 mm. On the greater coverts there is a tendency towards a vestigial apical spot, which has disappeared on the remiges and tail-feathers perhaps due to abrasion. If this tendency was universal it would imply a double light bar on each feather.

It is noteworthy that in the two French cases mentioned above the light bars are only found in the juvenile plumage. It suggests that this momentary inhibition of pigmentation is only effective during the immature stage of life, perhaps under an abnormal endocrine influence, since it is absent at the first moult from the juvenile to the first winter dress. This peculiarity has already been described by Dr. Harrison in the British specimens of the "mottled" variety.

The Rook of analogous appearance figured by Millet in the *Faune de Maine et Loire*, an apparent adult, might be a first year bird not accurately depicted in so far as its bareness of face is concerned, although Millet was

careful as to detail and the plate was executed by him. If Millet's bird was indeed an adult, the mutation was not the same as that described by Dr. Harrison, and the above French examples now described, for this last variety does not occur in the adult birds.

## Notices.

### STOCK OF THE "BULLETIN".

It is proposed to reduce the stock of the "Bulletin," but before this is done members are given an opportunity to acquire parts at 2/6 each. Applications should be made to W. E. Glegg, Esq., Zoological Museum, Tring, Herts. No reply will be sent if parts are not available.

### PUBLICATION OF THE "BULLETIN."

Members who make a contribution at a Meeting should hand the M.S. to the Editor at that Meeting. As the proofs will be corrected by the Editor, it is essential that the M.S. should be correct and either typed or written very clearly with scientific and place names in block letters. The first mention of a scientific name should be spelt out in full, i.e., genus, specific name, racial name, (if any) and author. Any further mention of the same name need only have the initial letter of the genus and no further mention of the author.

If no M.S. is handed to the Editor at the Meeting, a note will be inserted mentioning the contribution.

### DINNERS AND MEETINGS FOR 1950.

18 January ; 15 February ; 22 March\* ; 19 April ; 17 May ; 7 July ; 18 October ; 15 November ; 20 December.

\*The March meeting is on the fourth Wednesday of the month, not the third Wednesday, and will be held at the Zoological Society of London. The Dinner preceding this Meeting is in conjunction with the British Ornithologists Union.

### ADDRESS OF TREASURER.

Members are reminded that the annual subscription of £1 1s. 0d. was due on 1st January, 1950.

Remittances should be sent to the new Hon. Treasurer :—

C. N. WALTER, ESQ.,

290, Finsbury Pavement House,

Moorgate, London, E.C.2.

### NEXT MEETING.

The next Meeting of the Club will take place on Wednesday, 22nd March, 1950, at the Zoological Society of London, Regents Park, preceded by a combined B.O.U. and B.O.C. Dinner at 6.30 P.M.



# BULLETIN

OF THE

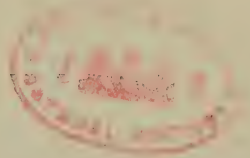
## BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB.

**PURCHASED**

**17 APR 1950**

**Volume 70.**

**No. 3.**



The four-hundred and ninety-third Meeting of the Club was held at the Zoological Society of London, Regents Park, N.W.8, on Wednesday, 22nd March, 1950, following a dinner at 6.30 p.m., in conjunction with the Annual General Meeting of the British Ornithologists' Union. Dr. A. LANDSBOROUGH THOMSON, the President of the Union took the Chair at the Dinner and Colonel R. MEINERTZHAGEN, Vice-Chairman of the Club at the subsequent Meeting.

*Members of the Union present:*—Viscount F. M. ALANBROOKE; A. G. E. AMES; Major G. AYLMER; Mrs. E. BARNES; Lt.-Col. R. S. P. BATES; Miss E. V. BAXTER; Dr. W. K. BIGGER; R. O. BLYTH; Dr. F. K. BOSTON; P. E. BROWN; J. CHEAR; R. DA CUNHA; Miss M. G. DAVIES; O. H. DAVIS; J. F. M. FLOYD; N. R. FUGGLES-COUCHMAN; V. R. GARRETT; Mrs. H. A. GILBERT; D. GOODWIN; L. A. HALDANE; P. H. T. HARTLEY; R. E. HEATH; Sir CYRIL HURCOMB; Dr. J. HUXLEY; T. A. M. JACK; Capt. T. B. W. JEANS; D. F. LAWSON; E. H. N. LOWTHER; F. LUDLOW; Miss E. McEWEN; R. E. MOREAU; C. A. NORRIS; S. C. PORTER; G. W. RAYNER; Major B. L. RIGBY; W. ROBINSON; Dr. K. B. ROOKE; M. ROWLING; The Rev. L. C. SARGENT; Dr. D. W. SETH-SMITH; Major D. ABEL SMITH; IAN M. THOMSON; Dr. W. H. THORPE; Miss S. M. TICEHURST; H. R. TUTT; Brig. F. E. W. VENNING; G. K. YEATES.

*Members of the Club present:*—Miss C. M. ACLAND; Dr. D. A. BANNERMAN; Miss P. BARCLAY SMITH; Mrs. E. BARNES; F. J. F. BARRINGTON; Maj. N. A. G. H. BEAL; Miss S. V. BENSON; Mrs. G. CHADWYCK HEALEY; Hon. G. K. CHARTERIS; Miss T. CLAY; E. COHEN; R. A. H. COOMBS; R. P. DONALDSON; I. J. FERGUSON LEES; J. FISHER; R. S. R. FITTER; H. A. GILBERT; W. E. GLEGG; Miss C. E. GODMAN; Miss E. GODMAN; Capt. C. H. B. GRANT (*Editor*); B. G. HARRISON; Dr. J. M. HARRISON; R. E. HEATH; P. A. D. HOLLOW; N. B. KINNEAR; Miss E. P. LEACH; Miss C. E. LONGFIELD; C. W. MACKWORTH-PRAED; Capt. J. H. McNEILE; Dr. J. F. MONK; E. M.

NICHOLSON; E. R. PARRINDER; G. PAULSON; Col. W. A. PAYN; A. S. PHILLIPS; Mrs. J. B. PRIESTLEY; R. A. W. REYNOLDS; Miss G. M. RHODES (*Hon. Secretary*); Dr. W. A. RICHARDS; D. SETH-SMITH; Maj. SIMONDS; H. N. SOUTHERN; Col. R. SPARROW; Lt.-Commr. C. P. STAPLES; Dr. A. LANDSBOROUGH THOMSON; B. W. TUCKER; Mrs. R. UPTON; N. J. WADLEY; C. N. WALTER (*Hon. Treasurer*); Mrs. BOYD WATT; C. WHYBROW; A. WILLIAMS; C. G. M. DE WORMS; Col. O. E. WYNNE.

*Guests*:—Miss A. J. AVERY; L. M. BAKER; Mrs. R. S. P. BATES; Mrs. BEAL; Prof. and Mrs. G. DE BEER; W. G. BIGGER; Mrs. F. K. BOSTON; JOHN BURTON; W. D. CAMPBELL; Hon. Mrs. G. CHARTERIS; L. DE CHATELEUX; Mrs. J. CHEAR; H. M. CLEMINSON; Mrs. E. COHEN; Mrs. R. DA CUNHA; L. G. DUKE; G. EDWARDS; Miss FLETCHER; Miss M. V. GIBON; Dr. and Mrs. HARE; D. L. HARRISON; Miss HARRISON; R. W. HAYMAN; J. HILLABY; Dr. A. C. HUDSON; Mrs. JOHN JACOB; S. JENYNS; Miss C. G. P. JOHNSTON; Dr. F. D. KELSEY; N. KNIGHT; Miss A. MAVRO-JANI; Dr. J. D. MILLS; Mrs. J. D. MILLS; Mrs. R. E. MOREAU; Mr. and Mrs. D. A. T. MORGAN; E. MYTUM; Miss MONICA NEWMAN; Mr. and Mrs. ODGERS; C. L. OTTOWAY; Miss V. OTTOWAY; Mrs. E. D. PARRINDER; Mrs. G. PAULSON; Mrs. A. S. PHILLIPS; Mrs. W. A. RICHARDS; Miss J. SARGENT; Mrs. D. SETH-SMITH; Mrs. D. W. SETH-SMITH; Mrs. R. SPARROW; Mrs. L. L. STAPLES; G. STOUGHTON-HARRIS; Dr. G. TAYLOR; Mrs. A. LANDSBOROUGH THOMSON; Mrs. I. M. THOMSON; H. A. THOMPSON; Mrs. W. H. THORPE; Mrs. M. P. TICEHURST; Mrs. B. W. TUCKER; R. J. UPTON; Mrs. N. J. WADLEY; Maj.-Gen. WAINWRIGHT; Mrs. C. N. WALTER; C. WEBB; Mrs. C. WHYBROW; W. WILSON; Mrs. WITHERBY; Mrs. R. O. WYNNE.

Members of the Union, 47; Members of the Club, 55; Guests, 70; Total, 172.

## Films and Slides.

### THE GOLDEN EAGLE.

Lord Alanbrooke showed a coloured film of the Golden Eagle at the nest.

### ICELAND.

Mr. G. K. YEATES showed slides of the scenery, birds and flora of Iceland.

Both these exhibitions were much appreciated by those present.

### A New Race of *Estrilda paludicola* from the Congo River.

Dr. JAMES P. CHAPIN sent the following:—

*ESTRILDA PALUDICOLA RUTHÆ*, new race.

*Description*.—Differs from *E. p. paludicola* Heuglin of the Bahr-el-Ghazal and Uelle District by the lighter coloration of the upperparts,

most pronounced in the grey of the crown, and by the nearly pure white breast, abdomen, and under tail-coverts. Even the throat and flanks are greyish-white.

*Type*.—Male, sub-adult, Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist. No. 297187, Lukolela, Congo River, 26 March, 1931.

*Measurements of type*.—Wing 43, tail 39, culmen from base 8, tarsus 13 mm.

*Distribution*.—Grasslands along the middle Congo River near Bolobo and Lukolela.

*Remarks*.—This race appears to be widely isolated from any other form of *E. paludicola*, the equatorial forest separating it from the nominate race, while *E. p. benguellensis* Neumann of Angola approaches only to within about 400 miles on the south, near Duque de Braganca. It may be noted that within the race *E. p. paludicola* specimens from eastern Uganda and North Kavirondo are slightly more whitish on the lower surface than those of Lado and the Uelle District. But they do not approach *E. p. ruthæ* in the light coloration of the upperparts and are considerably larger, with wings 45–50 mm., and tails 44–48 mm. long.

It has been suggested that the ranges of *Estrilda melpoda* (Vieillot), and *E. paludicola* were complementary, and that they might therefore be conspecific. But *E. melpoda* and *E. anambræ* Kemp, occur together in Southern Nigeria, *E. melpoda* and *E. paludicola* have both been taken at Buta in the Lower Uelle, and now *E. melpoda* and *E. p. ruthæ* are both known to live in the region of Lukolela. The wide gap separating the ranges of *E. anambræ* and nominate *E. paludicola* is very surprising, and it might be argued that *E. anambræ* is worthy of specific rank.

It used to be supposed that this species might be represented in the region of Stanley Pool by *Estrilda poliopareia* Reichenow, 1902, a very brownish form with greyish cheeks and light red upper tail-coverts. The origin of the type specimen has always remained doubtful, and recently Mr. Hermann Grote has compared it with the type and co-type of *Estrilda anambræ* Kemp, 1907, which are likewise in the Berlin Museum. Mr. Grote finds all three birds identical, so it seems that the Southern Nigerian race must be now called *E. p. poliopareia*.

In recent years there has been no published record of any form of *E. paludicola* from the region of the Congo River or the Kasai District. But in March, 1931, I was surprised to see four examples of a light-colored wax-bill of this species consorting with a number of *Estrilda astrild* and *E. melpoda* in a field of high grass not far from Lukolela on the middle Congo River. One was collected, and found to be a male already in adult plumage, but showing an indication of immaturity in the skull-roof. This specimen lay for years in the American Museum collection before I looked at it again, and then I was amazed to see that it differed from all our specimens of the nominate race by its very whitish under surface.

During the past autumn Doctor Henri Schouteden kindly showed me at the Congo Museum in Tervueren ten more specimens gathered by his native collectors at Kunungu and neighbouring villages in the area just east of Bolobo. They all agree with my own example in the whiteness of their under surface. It is evident that *E. paludicola* is represented along the middle Congo River by a local race of just the opposite extreme of coloration from *E. p. poliopareia*. This middle Congo race I propose to name after my wife.

### A New Race of Honey Guide, a New Race of Macrosphenus from Nigeria and a note on Illadopsis.

Mr. S. MARCHANT sent the following and specimens for exhibition:—

INDICATOR CONIROSTRIS PALLIDUS, new race.

*Description*.—As compared with the nominate race, the whole of the underparts is much paler grey and shows a very slight buff wash; as compared with *I. c. ussheri* Sharpe, the underparts lack the strong olive-yellow wash of that race and the ground colour is distinctly grey, not grey-brown. The crown and nape are also a paler grey than in the nominate race: the grey tone extends further onto the mantle. The olive-golden edging to the feathers of the upperparts is perhaps a trifle paler than in the other races.

*Distribution*.—Besides three skins collected near Owerri, Southern Nigeria, there are two others in the British Museum: one from Kanno, Plateau Province, Northern Nigeria, which Dr. Bannerman has already pointed out is much paler than Cameroon birds, see *Birds of Tropical West Africa*, 3, p. 414, and the other from between Ilesha and Erinomo in the Western Provinces of Nigeria. This race then probably extends over the greater part of Nigeria where conditions are favourable, but as no other skins of this species seem to be known from the area between Fanti in the Gold Coast, the type locality of *I. c. ussheri*, and the Cameroons Mt. where the nominate race occurs, the range cannot be more precisely defined at present.

*Type*.—In the British Museum. Breeding female; Umuagwu, Owerri Division, Southern Nigeria—twelve miles south-west of Owerri on the road to Port Harcourt—Lat. 5° 20' N., Long. 6° 55' E. Collected on 24 October 1948 by S. Marchant. Collector's No. 211: Brit. Mus. Reg. No. 1949.33.22.

*Measurements of type*.—Wing 84, tail 49, bill 10, tarsus 13 mm.

*Soft parts*.—Bill black: iris brown: feet and tarsus grey.

*Remarks*.—Apparently confined to high forest or broken forest at edge of high forest, but never encountered except in association with breeding colonies of *Gymnobucco c. calvus* (Lafresnaye) which species it evidently parasitises. Never showed any signs of leading to bees' nests. Stomach contents of three females were a sticky compact yellow mass probably of bees' wax, in one case with hymenopteran remains,

*Other measurements:—*

		Wing	Tail	Bill	Tarsus
Male 7th December, 1927 (Kanno)	...	95	59	10	14 mm.
? 19th July, 1938 (Ilesha)	...	83	48	10	14 "
Female 11th May, 1947 (Owerri)	...	81	48	10	13 "
Female 2nd August, 1948 (Owerri)	...	86	51	10	14 "

*MACROSPHENUS KEMPI FLAMMEUS*, new race.

*Description.*—Differs from the nominate race in the underparts. The throat is a somewhat clearer and darker grey which colour continues onto the centre of the breast without passing into grey-brown, and thence down the centre of the underparts: only the sides of the breast are grey-brown. The most striking difference is in the colour of the long silky feathers of the sides and flanks, which are flame-coloured and much brighter than the somewhat dull orange-chestnut of the nominate race. The colour of the upperparts agrees closely with that of the type specimen of the species, but is a shade darker.

*Distribution.*—Known only from two specimens from the Owerri district of Southern Nigeria, these being the most easterly occurrence of the species to date. Only other skins in the British Museum are from Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast and Lagos, all of which belong to *M.k.kempi* (Sharpe). The present records represent an extension of the range of the species eastwards.

*Type.*—In the British Museum. Breeding Male, Umuagwu, Owerri Division, Southern Nigeria—Lat 5° 20' N., Long. 6° 55' E.—twelve miles south of Owerri on the Port Harcourt road. Collected on 21st August, 1949, by S. Marchant. Collector's No. 318. Brit. Mus. Reg. No. 1950.9.1.

*Measurements of type.*—Wing 59, tail 38, bill 19 tarsus 21mm.

*Soft parts.*—Bill blackish, but pink along edge of mandibles and centre line of lower mandible: iris yellow: feet and tarsus plumbeous.

*Remarks.*—Inhabits densest patches of climber tangles at edge of high forest or thick young secondary forest. Dr. Bannerman, when describing "*apparently immature birds*" in *Birds of Tropical West Africa* 4, p. 127, probably refers to two specimens in the British Museum from Sierra Leone. Both are males, are much darker below than the type and almost entirely lack the rufous colour on the flanks. Although the collector's label on one of these skins suggests that it was recorded as a breeding male it seems much more likely that it was in fact immature, since the orange-chestnut flanks of the type from Bo, Sierra Leone, which was unsexed, are matched well by adult skins from the Ivory Coast and Lagos.

*Other measurements.—*

		Wing	Tail	Bill	Tarsus
Male 13th November, 1949	...	59	39	20	19mm.

AN UNNAMED SPECIMEN OF AN *ILLADOPSIS* SP.

Attention should perhaps be drawn to a skin of an *Illadopsis*, collected by S. Marchant at Owerri, Southern Nigeria on 13th October, 1946, Collector's No. 25, Brit. Mus. Reg. No. 1947.24.21. This specimen, a breeding male, agrees on the underside very closely indeed with skins of *Illadopsis c.cleaveri* (Shelley), though it is slightly dusker across the breast and perhaps not quite so rufous on the flanks. The upperside is, however, very distinct from that species. The crown instead of being black is dark grey: there are slight traces of rufous on the lores and above the eyes, but the pale grey or whitish streak passing over the eye and extending down the sides of the nape, which is most noticeable in races of *I.cleaveri*, is lacking: careful inspection of the skin does, however, show a grey streak, slightly paler than the colour of the crown, in this position. The rest of the upperparts are a dark olive brown and entirely lack a rufous tinge, which seems to be characteristic to some extent of all races of *I.cleaveri*, though there is a suggestion of this colour along the outer edge of the primaries. Unfortunately the tail is missing.

Possibly the most striking feature of the skin is the powerful flesh-coloured feet and legs, which show a marked resemblance to those of races of *I.cleaveri*, although colour only seems to have been recorded in the race *I.c.batesi* from the Cameroons. The bill too appears to be identical with that of *I.cleaveri*. Measurements and colour of the soft parts of this skin made in the flesh are as follows:—

Wing 79mm: bill, black above, white below, 18mm: iris hazel: feet and tarsus pale flesh 31 mm.

All these measurements seem to be slightly larger than those of any races of *I.cleaveri*, as recorded by Dr. Bannerman in "Birds of Tropical West Africa", 4, pp. 114-116.

This Bird was the only one encountered during more than three years collecting in the Owerri area and it cannot therefore be at all common. During that time no undoubted specimen of *I.cleaveri* was obtained either, though the species might be expected to occur in the area: indeed no specimens of *I.cleaveri* are apparently known from Nigeria. The nominate race is only recorded from the forest country of Fanti in the Gold Coast: another race, *I.c.johnsoni* Buttkofer, has been described from Liberia further to the west: the race *I.c.batesi*, is known from the forests of the Cameroons, especially the River Ja area, and Gabon, while finally the race, *I.c.paensis* Bannerman, occurs on Fernando Po. Thus between Fanti and the Cameroons there is an apparent gap of many hundreds of miles in the range of the species. But it is to be expected that the bird actually occurs in this intervening area, a general lack of collecting merely being responsible for its apparent absence.

In view of this and of the general unlikelihood of discovering a completely new species in the area, and taking into account the striking similarities of this skin to *I.cleaveri*, it is felt that the specimen should probably be referred to that species. From the admitted

differences in plumage of the upperparts, if this contention is correct, the specimen should represent a hitherto undescribed local race: as it was found to be a breeding male, when dissected, it could hardly be in immature plumage and few forest species seem to show any seasonal change of dress, which in any case has not been suggested for members of this genus. It is considered inadvisable to apply a new name to this skin, a single damaged one, but probably when further complete skins are available from Southern Nigeria, it will be found to be a race of *I. cleaveri*.

The writer is indebted to Dr. D. A. Bannerman and Capt. C. H. B. Grant for advice and help.

### Notes on Eastern African Birds.

Captain C. H. B. GRANT and Mr. C. W. MACKWORTH-PRAED sent the following three notes:—

- (1) On the Status of *Xanthophilus xanthops camburni* (Sharpe), Bull. B.O.C., 10, p. 35, 1890: Mt. Kenya, Kenya Colony.

This race was described on a female, said to be smaller than the nominate race. This is not so, as the wing measurements of *X.x.xanthops* are, males 92 to 90, females 86 to 96 mm., and in *X.x.camburni*, males 92 to 97, females 85 to 92 mm. There is some individual variation in general colour and in the amount of orange on the chin and throat, and we can find no character by which *X.x.camburni* can be separated from *X.x.xanthops*. We therefore place *Xanthophilus xanthops camburni* (Sharpe) as a synonym of *Xanthophilus xanthops xanthops* (Hartlaub).

- (2) On the status of *Anthus nicholsoni chyuluensis* Van Someren, J.E.A. & U.N.H.Soc. 14, p. 56, 1939: Chyulu Hills, south-eastern Kenya Colony.

Through the kindness of the Trustees of the Coryndon Memorial Museum, Nairobi, the British Museum has received the type and two specimens of this race. We have compared them with the series in the British Museum collection and find they agree with specimens from Abyssinia of *Anthus similis hararensis* Neumann, and therefore place *Anthus nicholsoni chuluensis* Van Someren, as a synonym of *Anthus similis hararensis* Neumann.

- (3) On the status of *Pseudoalcippe abyssinicus chyulu* Van Someren, J.E.A. & U.N.H.Soc. 14, p. 59, 1939: Chyulu Hills, south-eastern Kenya Colony:—

Through the kindness of the Trustees of the Coryndon Memorial Museum, Nairobi, the British Museum has received the type and four specimens of this race which we have now compared with the large series in the National Collection, and find that they agree perfectly with birds from Abyssinia to Tanganyika Territory in colour and size.

This race is based on some colour differences and size, having wings of 64 to 69 mm. as against 67 to 74 mm. The series in the British Museum collection shows that there is individual variation in colour and considerable variation in wing measurement, i.e. 64-67 mm. in birds from the same area. Several specimens from Abyssinia, the western side of Kenya Colony, and south-eastern Tanganyika Territory have the wing measurements as low as 66 mm. and two are respectively 65 and 64 mm.

We therefore place *Pseudoalcippe abyssinicus chyulu* Van Someren as a synonym of *Pseudoalcippe abyssinicus abyssinicus* (Rüppell).

### Notices.

#### STOCK OF THE "BULLETIN".

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#### PUBLICATION OF THE "BULLETIN."

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If no M.S. is handed to the Editor at the Meeting, a note will be inserted mentioning the contribution.

#### DINNERS AND MEETINGS FOR 1950.

18 January; 15 February; 22 March; 19 April; 17 May; 5 July; 18 October; 15 November; 20 December.

#### NEXT MEETING.

The next Meeting of the Club will take place on Wednesday, 19th April, 1950, at the Rembrandt Hotel, Thurloe Place, S.W.7, preceded by a Dinner at 6.30 p.m.

# BULLETIN

OF THE

## BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB.

PURCHASED  
13 MAY 1950

Volume 70.

No. 4.



The four-hundred and ninety-fourth Meeting of the Club was held at the Rembrandt Hotel, Thurloe Place, S.W.7, on Wednesday, 19th April, 1950, following a dinner at 6.30 P.M.

*Chairman* : Col. R. MEINERTZHAGEN.

*Members present* :—Miss P. BARCLAY-SMITH ; Major N. A. G. BEAL ; Miss T. CLAY ; J. FISHER ; Capt. C. H. B. GRANT (*Editor*) ; Dr. J. M. HARRISON ; Miss E. P. LEACH ; Miss C. LONGFIELD ; C. W. MACKWORTH-PRAED ; Miss G. M. RHODES (*Hon. Secretary*) ; Lieut.-Comdr. C. P. STAPLES ; Dr. A. LANDSBOROUGH THOMSON ; Col. W. A. PAYN ; J. POOLE ; A. WILLIAMS ; C. N. WALTER (*Hon. Treasurer*) ; C. DE WORMS ; Col. O. E. WYNNE.

*Guests* :—R. ELDON ELLISON ; Miss N. J. GRANT ; R. E. MOREAU.

Members, 19 ; Guests, 3 ; Total, 22.

### On the validity of the genus *Chloris* Cuvier.

Col. R. MEINERTZHAGEN made the following remarks and exhibited specimens :—

Fifty years ago the Goldfinch, Linnet, Siskin and Redpoll all enjoyed different genera, this separation being mainly due to a rather insular study of the groups and leaving African, Oriental and South American members of the family to experts in those regions. But to-day a broader view is taken and all these birds are included under the genus *Carduelis* Brisson.

And still more recently, many ornithologists have suggested that the Greenfinch genus—*Chloris* Cuvier—should suffer the same fate.

But if changes in names improve taxonomy, there can be no argument about it. Genera reflect relationship, species show differences.

Published 9th May, 1950.

PRICE 2/6.

I show you this evening two specimens of the Chinese Greenfinch—*Chloris sinica* Linnæus—which in almost every particular are intermediate between *Chloris* and *Carduelis*. I also exhibit two wild hybrids between the Goldfinch and Greenfinch which show very much the same characters as *Chloris sinica*. It would be easy to justify placing *Chloris sinica* in either *Carduelis* or *Chloris*; if that is admitted then surely relationship must over-ride prejudice.

### The Palaearctic Migration System in Perspective.

Mr. R. E. MOREAU gave his reasons for thinking that the Palaearctic Region had tended to bulk too large in discussion of migration and its origin. He gave examples of long-distance migration in other parts of the world, including the tropics, and referred to what was known of the climatic zones of the world in the Tertiary. He agreed with Mayr and Meise, "Vogelzug," 1, pp. 149-172, 1930, that migration had not originated as a result of the Pleistocene glaciations, but was far older and was the result of adaptation to seasonal differences in the ability of the breeding area to support birds.

Mr. James Fisher, Dr. J. M. Harrison, Col. R. Meinertzhagen, Mr. C. W. Mackworth-Praed and Dr. A. Landsborough Thomson entered into the discussion that took place after Mr. Moreau had read his paper.

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If no M.S. is handed to the Editor at the Meeting, a note will be inserted mentioning the contribution.

## DINNERS AND MEETINGS FOR 1950.

18 January ; 15 February ; 22 March ; 19 April ; 17 May ; 5 July ;  
18 October ; 15 November ; 20 December.

## NEXT MEETING.

The next Meeting of the Club will take place on Wednesday, 17th  
May, 1950, at the Rembrandt Hotel, Thurloe Place, S.W.7,  
preceded by a Dinner at 6.30 P.M.



# BULLETIN

OF THE

## BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB.

Volume 70.

No. 5.



PURCHASED

23 JUN 1950

The four-hundred and ninety-fifth meeting of the Club was held at the Rembrandt Hotel, Thurloe Place, S.W.7, on Wednesday, 17th May, 1950, following a dinner at 6.30 P.M.

*Chairman* : Col. R. MEINERTZHAGEN.

*Members* :—Miss C. M. ACLAND; Miss P. BARCLAY-SMITH; D. BUSHELL; Mrs. G. M. CHADWYCK-HEALEY; Miss T. CLAY; Dr. DE HAMEL; R. PRESTON DONALDSON; Capt. C. H. B. GRANT (*Editor*); Dr. J. M. HARRISON; Dr. A. LANDSBOROUGH-THOMSON; Dr. G. CARMICHAEL LOW; Mrs. PERCY LOW; J. MAVROGORDATO; E. R. PARRINDER; JOHN POOLE; C. W. MACKWORTH PRAED; Miss G. M. RHODES (*Hon. Secretary*); J. A. RUSSELL; PETER SCOTT; Lt.-Commander C. P. STAPLES; Mrs. C. P. STAPLES; Lt.-Col. W. P. TENISON; Mrs. P. V. UPTON; C. N. WALTER (*Hon. Treasurer*); A. WILLIAMS; C. DE WORMS; Col. O. E. WYNNE.

*Guests* :—Professor G. DE BEER; C. BENSON; E. E. CROSSMAN; Miss L. P. GRANT; Miss N. J. GRANT; E. W. HENDRY; H. L. HUNT; W. E. HUNT; H. JOHANSEN; Mrs. A. LANDSBOROUGH-THOMSON; Mr. and Mrs. LANDAUER; HOYES LLOYD; Mrs. LLOYD; R. E. MOREAU; BJORN PETERSON; Mrs. PETERSON; A. G. RUSSELL; Mrs. TENISON; Mrs. WALTER; Mrs. WILLIAMS; JOHN YELLAND; Dr. E. C. ZIMMERMAN.

Members, 28 ; Guests, 23 ; Total, 51.

### Origin of Life in Hawaii.

Dr. E. C. Zimmerman showed coloured slides and a colour film of the Hawaiian Islands and their volcanoes in eruption. He gave a running commentary, and explained how the fauna and flora could have first arrived on these islands.

Published June 16th, 1950.

PRICE 2/6.

## The generic limits of *Treron* Vieillot.

By BISWAMOY BISWAS.

On the characters of the scalloping or expansion of the third primary, length of the ramphotheca, presence or absence of a naked loreal skin, and the proportionate length of the tail, Peters (1) (2) recognized the genera *Sphenurus* Swainson, *Butoreron* Bonaparte, and *Treron* Vieillot, synonymizing *Vinago*, *Crocopus*, and *Dendrophasa* with *Treron*.

From an examination of the species and races of the three genera upheld by Peters, I am of the opinion that even *Sphenurus* and *Butoreron* cannot be recognized as distinct genera. First, *Butoreron*, which Peters(2) accepted "with some misgivings," is nothing more than a larger *Treron*, proportionately longer tail and shorter wing-tip in *Butoreron* can hardly be considered as generic characters, and as such must be put in with *Treron*. I do not find any good character that distinguishes between *Sphenurus* and *Treron*. Peters(2) did not clearly mention any, but he evidently considered the proportionately longer tail and slender bill as generically distinctive characters. I am, however, not inclined to give these characters so much importance. About the third primary and the ramphotheca Peters' examples may be cited here. In the genus *Sphenurus*, the third primary is expanded in *S. sphenurus*, but it is scalloped in *S. sieboldii*, *S. korthalsi*, and *S. formosae*; and the loreal space is feathered in *S. sphenurus*, *S. korthalsi*, and *S. formosae*, but a narrow bare loreal skin is present in *S. apicauda*, *S. oxyura*, and *S. seimundi*. In view of the variable nature of these characters, I do not consider them to be of generic value. There then seem to be two possibilities: To divide this group of birds into a large number of genera on minor, variable characters, as was the practice before the work of Hartert and Goodson(3)—a highly artificial system; or to group them all in one large genus, which seems more natural. I would prefer the latter, and accordingly put them all in the synonymy of the oldest genus *Treron*.

This action invalidates the use of *Sphenurus sphenurus annamensis* Delacour, 1926, as we already have *Crocopus annamensis* Ogilvie-Grant, 1909. I, therefore, propose to rename it:—

***Treron sphenurus delacouri* nom. nov.**

I have to thank Mr. Jean Delacour and Dr. Ernst Mayr for their kind help in this study, and the authorities of the American Museum of Natural History for permission to work with their material.

### REFERENCES

- (1) Peters, J. L. 1937, *Check-list of birds of the world*, Cambridge, Mass., 3, pp. 11-14.
- (2) Peters, J. L. 1938, *Proc. 8th Int. Orn. Congr.*, Oxford, 1934, pp. 371-375.
- (3) Hartert, E. and Goodson, A. T. 1918, *Nov. Zool.*, 25, pp. 348-356.

## Some Records from Eastern Angola.

Mr. C. M. N. WHITE sent the following note:—

Between 1944 and 1949, I and my African collector were able to collect a number of birds in the Zambesi valley, East Angola; and, as this area has never been documented, the following may be worth recording. Lumbala is on the Zambesi River thirty miles north of the Northern Rhodesia border at Chavuma; Cazombo a further forty-five miles further north, and Cavungu (=Nana Candundu) a further twenty miles north.

*Pelecanus onocrotalus* Linnaeus.

*Pelecanus rufescens* Gmelin. Both species collected at Cavungu in November.

*Francolinus coqui angolensis* Rothschild. Cavungu.

*Guttera edouardi kathleenae* White. Lufwiji river, Lumbala.

*Sarothrura rufa* (Vieillot). Cavungu.

*Glareola nordmanni* Fischer. Large flocks south of Cazombo in September.

*Treron australis clayi* (White). Cavungu, Cazombo, Lumbala.

*Merops variegatus bangweoloensis* (Grant). Lumbala, Cazombo.

*Glaucidium capense ngamienae* (Roberts). Cavungu.

*Colius striatus lungae* White. Cavungu.

*Buccanodon anchietae katangae* Vincent. Cazombo, Cavungu.

*Pogoniulus leucolaima nyansae* (Neumann). Cavungu.

*Turdoides jardineii* (Smith). Birds from Cavungu are intermediate between the nominate race and *T. j. tanganjicae* (Reichenow).

*Andropadus virens virens* Cassin. Cavungu.

*Turdus olivaceus stormsi* Hartlaub. Cavungu.

*Cossypha heuglini heuglini* Hartlaub. Cavungu.

*Cossypha natalensis* Smith. Cavungu.

*Hippolais icterus* (Vieillot). Lumbala, February.

*Schoenicola brevirostris alexinae* Heuglin. Cavungu.

*Neolestes torquatus* Cabanis. Cavungu.

*Estrilda bengala semota* (White). Cazombo.

*Poliospiza mennelli* Chubb. Cavungu.

## The Brown Tit-babbler and the Blackcap in Nyasaland.

Mr. C. W. BENSON sent the following note:—

(a) *Brown Tit-babbler, Parisoma lugens* (Rüppell).

This species, race *P. l. clara* Meise, has already been recorded from Nyasaland, from Mussissi Mt., in the Karonga district, see Benson & Benson, Ann. Trans. Mus., 21, no. 2, p. 169, 1949. Recently I have obtained a series of six specimens on the slopes of Dedza and Chongoni Mts., at altitudes between 4,500 and 5,000 feet above sea-level, thus extending its known range west of Lake Nyasa some 300 miles further southward. Four of these specimens have been presented to the British Museum, and identified by Captain C. H. B. Grant as also of the race *P. l. clara*. I have also observed this species in Portuguese territory, close to Dedza, and on the slopes of Domwe Mt., 10 miles south-west of

Dedza. During 1936-7 I spent eight months at Dedza, but overlooked it, owing to its association with flat-topped trees of *Acacia woodii* Burt Davy, away from which, in Nyasaland, at any rate, it seems never normally to occur. This tree occurs in certain parts of Nyasaland at 4,500-5,000 feet above sea-level, where the average annual rainfall is not less than 40 inches. In the experience of Mr. W. E. Lewis, of the Nyasaland Forestry Department, and myself, it is absent from everywhere between the Dedza-Chongoni-Domwe area and Mussissi, and this seems to explain why *Parisoma lugens* has not been recorded from the intervening area. Elsewhere, too, *P. lugens* seems generally to be associated with flat-topped *Acacia* trees in comparatively humid areas, see for example Meise, Mitt. Zool. Mus. Berlin, 22, no. 1, p. 128, 1937 ("Urwald von Schirmakazien"), Jackson, "Birds of Kenya Colony and Uganda Protectorate", 2, p. 910, 1938, and Benson, "Ibis", p. 182, 1946.

One of my Dedza specimens, dated 11 November, a male, was collected at a nest containing two recently hatched young, still naked, with interior of mouth orange. The nest was on the edge of a plantation of introduced pines, *Pinus leiophylla* Cham. & Schl., where most of the trees of *Acacia woodii* have in recent years been cut down, though there were several less than 100 yards from the plantation. It was in one of these pines, about 30 feet high, and placed in a laterally branching fork, some 5 feet from the top. A female from Dedza, 12 November, was at its nest in an *Acacia woodii* tree, 20 feet above the ground, with two slightly incubated eggs. These eggs, now in the collection of Captain C. R. S. Pitman, are described by him as well pointed; pale greenish grey, smooth but scarcely glossy; with markings of light yellow-brown, pale olive-yellow and pale amber, all over, on underlying shades of light grey, mainly at the top of the large end. They remind him of some *Acrocephalus* eggs. Size  $19.3 \times 14.3$ ,  $19.1 \times 14.1$  mm. Both nests were open flimsy cups, of the following approximate dimensions, in mm.: Depth, external 50, internal 25; diameter, external 100, internal 60. The outer rim of each nest was made of petioles and mid-ribs of leaves, the base and the whole of the interior of very fine rootlets. Belcher, "Ibis", p. 92, 1942, likewise found the nest in Kenya Colony to be an exposed cup, and he contrasts the nesting habit with that of *P. plumbeum* (Hartlaub), which he records as laying in a hole in a tree. Three nests of *P. plumbeum* in Nyasaland, which I know of, were in such holes.

In its movements *Parisoma lugens* seems more typically a warbler than a flycatcher, with which latter family it is usually classified. In the flat tops of trees of *Acacia woodii* it is to be observed making a short flight of two or three feet, then perching for a few moments, apparently searching for insects, then flying on two or three feet, and so on, *ad. lib.* The call-note most frequently heard is a harsh "cha, . . ." ("a" as in "bad"), repeated about six times. A series of about eight mellow, warbling notes, difficult to describe, with an abrupt, harsh ending, is also to be heard. Neither of these calls is audible much over 50 yards, at any rate to the average ear. Both have been heard during the period October-March, and are probably to be heard throughout the year.

(b) *Blackcap*, *Sylvia atricapilla* (Linnaeus).

This species has already been recorded from near Mzimba, Nyasaland, see Benson & Benson, Ann. Trans. Mus., 21, no. 2, p. 170, 1949. There seems to be no other published record from so far south. I have also obtained a male near Dedza, on the edge of evergreen scrub, at an altitude of 5,500 feet above sea-level, on 5 January. My collector, Jali Makawa, also tells me that he saw one on Mangoche Mt., near Fort Johnston, in evergreen forest at about 5,000 feet, on 19 November. He already knew the species in the field in Abyssinia. In contrast to the Garden-Warbler, *Sylvia borin* (Boddaert), *S. atricapilla* is certainly uncommon so far south as Nyasaland.

### Notices.

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18 January ; 15 February ; 22 March ; 19 April ; 17 May ; 5 July ; 18 October ; 15 November ; 20 December.

#### NEXT MEETING.

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**PURCHASED**  
11 SEP 1950



# **BULLETIN**

OF THE

## **BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB**

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**Volume 70.**  
**No. 6.**

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The four-hundred and ninety-sixth meeting of the Club was held at the Rembrandt Hotel, Thurloe Place, S.W.7, on Wednesday, 5th July, 1950, following a dinner at 6.30 P.M.

*Chairman:* SIR PHILIP MANSON BAHR.

*Members:*— Miss C. M. ACLAND; Miss P. BARCLAY-SMITH; Mrs. E. BARNES; F. J. F. BARRINGTON; D. BUSHELL; Mrs. CHADWYCK-HEALEY; Capt. C. H. B. GRANT (*Editor*); Dr. J. M. HARRISON; R. E. HEATH; Dr. A. LANDSBOROUGH-THOMSON; C. W. MACKWORTH-PRAED; E. M. NICHOLSON; Lt.-Col. W. A. PAYN; J. POOLE; Miss G. M. RHODES (*Hon. Secretary*); Dr. W. A. RICHARDS; D. SETH-SMITH; Lt.-Commander C. P. STAPLES; Mrs. C. P. STAPLES; Col. W. P. TENISON; N. J. WADLEY; C. N. WALTER (*Hon. Treasurer*); A. WILLIAMS; Col. O. E. WYNNE.

*Guests:*— S. E. CROSSMAN; Mrs. V. JOHNSTON; Mrs. A. LANDSBOROUGH-THOMSON; T. H. NOWELL-SMITH.

*Guests of the Club:*— E. BANKS; Dr. R. C. MURPHY; Mrs. MOORE; Mrs. R. C. MURPHY.

25 Members; 8 Guests; Total 33.

### **Exhibition of Birds of Paradise from New Guinea**

Mr. E. BANKS exhibited the specimens and made the following remarks:—

In 1949 Mr. Shaw Mayer obtained a series of 42 Birds of Paradise from the Mt. Hagen area of North-east New Guinea, some of which I exhibit. This fine series, together with a male obtained by Captain N. B. Blood in 1949 on Mt. Hagen, is now in the National Collection. All these specimens belong to the genus *Astrapia* and appear to show

that *Astrapia mayeri* Stonor from the country west of Mt. Hagen is a white-tailed race of *Astrapia stephanie* Finsch & Meyer, as the specimens from the east side of Mt. Hagen show a variable amount of black and white in the tail individually. If this is so, then we have white-tailed birds with narrow tail feathers from west of Mt. Hagen grading into *A.s. feminina* east of Mt. Hagen, to *A.s. ducalis* Mayr, of the Herzog Mts., and the black-tailed *A.s. stephanie*, with broad tail feathers, of the Owen Stanley Mts.

I have to thank Dr. Stresemann of the Berlin Museum for the kind loan of three specimens of *A.s. feminina* Neumann.

### The Moas of Pyramid Valley, New Zealand

Dr. R. C. MURPHY gave a most interesting talk on the discovery in this valley of the remains of Moas and other extinct birds, and the work that has, and is being done to recover their remains. He showed coloured slides of the country and the Moa bones *in situ*.

### The Cape Eagle-Owl, *Bubo capensis capensis* Smith, in Nyasaland

Mr. C. W. BENSON sent the following note:—

On 10 May, 1950, one of my Government staff brought to me an owl, which he had just previously killed with a stone. It had been perched in a *Ficus* sp. tree, a few yards from the Dedza District Office, altitude 5,200 feet above sea-level. It was a male, with gonads very small. Wing-length 390 mm. This appears to be the first record of this race from north of the Transvaal. The specimen has been presented to the British Museum.

### On the genus *Emarginata* Shelley

Mr. C. M. N. WHITE sent the following note:—

In Bull. B.O.C. 70, pp. 9-10, 1950, Colonel Meinertzhagen discusses the significance of the "sickle-winged" emargination in some African chats. He rightly points out that this character is of no generic value and places *Emarginata* as a synonym of *Oenanthe*.

I know *Cercomela familiaris falkensteini* (Cabanis) and *C.f. angolensis* Lynes in the field and have also seen *Emarginata sinuata* (Sundevall) in life. All closely resemble one another in their appearance and habits, including the persistent wing flicker. Further comparison of skins shows that the two species are very alike and that *Emarginata* is indeed not a good genus but is a synonym of *Cercomela* rather than of *Oenanthe*.

*Cercomela sinuata* is in plumage an almost perfect replica of *C. familiaris* (Stephens) but shows some interesting differences in proportion. It is smaller, with wing 72-81 against 83-96, and tail 46-53 against 57-68 mm, but it has much longer legs, the tarsus measuring 26-29 mm, against 22-26 mm in *C. familiaris*. A juvenile of *C. sinuata* is also much lighter than that of *C. familiaris* with more pronounced light spangling.

So similar are the species *C. familiaris* and *C. sinuata* that some might treat them as representatives of a single species, but this cannot be adopted as their distributions overlap considerably in the Cape Province of South Africa.

### A revision of *Anthreptes collaris* (Vieillot), with descriptions of two new races

Mr. C. M. N. WHITE sent the following note:—

A revision of this sunbird to determine the races in Northern Rhodesia lead to consideration of the whole species and its races; I recognise the following.

*Anthreptes collaris collaris* (Vieillot), 1819.  
Gamtoos River, Cape Province.

Secondaries and greater coverts and primary coverts edged with green; female with whitish chin becoming greyish yellow on throat. Wing in twelve males 51-55 mm.

*Distribution*.—Coastal forests of the Cape Province to Natal and south Zululand at Ngoye and Eshowe.

*Anthreptes collaris zuluensis* (Roberts), 1931.  
Mkuzi River, north-east Zululand.

Secondaries with mainly yellowish edges glossed slightly with green; the greater coverts and primary coverts with very narrow green edges, less broad than in nominate race. Female with throat as in the nominate race, i.e. greyer than in next race. Wing in ten males 52-56 mm.

*Distribution*.—North east Zululand and Inhambane to the Mount Selinda area of eastern Southern Rhodesia, intergrading with the next race about Gorongosa in Portuguese East Africa.

*Anthreptes collaris zambesiana* (Shelley), 1880. Shupanga,  
Zambesi River, of which *A.c. chobiensis* (Roberts), 1932,  
Chobe River, is a synonym.

Secondaries with yellowish edges, and the greater and primary coverts with no green edges. Throat of female yellow. Wing in nine

males from northern Portuguese East Africa 50-56 mm, and in five males from Nyasaland west of the Shiré River and the eastern province of Northern Rhodesia 53-56 mm. Roberts thought birds from the Chobe River with wings 55.5-57 mm were larger but had only two males.

*Distribution*.—The Zambesi River valley and Northern Portuguese East Africa to Nyasaland, the eastern province of Northern Rhodesia and up the Zambesi River valley to the Chobe River and Mababe flats.

*Anthreptes collaris elachior* Mearns, 1910. Changanwe, Kenya Colony, of which *A.c. teitensis* van Someren, 1921, Teita and *A.c. jubaensis* van Someren, 1931, Dolo, Upper Juba River, are synonyms.

Differs from the preceding race in being decidedly paler below, females with yellow throats. Wing in thirteen males from Zanzibar Island, Mombasa, and Lamu 49-52 mm.

*Distribution*.—From the Juba River and coastal Kenya Colony and Zanzibar Island, south through coastal Tanganyika Territory and Mafia Island and inland to Teita, Tsavo, Takaungu, Longido, Nguru Mts., and Kilosa.

*Note*.—Birds from Mafia Island with wings 52-56 mm., are rather darker below intergrading with the last race and birds from the other inland localities cited average both darker below and larger with wings 51-57 mm. These resemble the birds which van Someren named *A.c. teitensis*. They represent intergradation with the darker inland populations defined below and the larger size may be due to a slight increase in altitude as well as to intergradation but the differences are not constant enough to merit their separation nor do I believe that unstable intergrades of this type are suitable for recognition by name.

*Anthreptes collaris garguensis* Mearns, 1915. Mt. Gargues, Kenya Colony, of which *A.c. ugandae* van Someren, 1921, Maraquet, Uganda, is a synonym.

Much darker and richer yellow below than the preceding races with less purity of yellow due to a slight green tinge, and more olive sides; the females with the throat and chest dark grey with a slight olive tinge. Wing in twenty males 52.5-58 mm.

*Distribution*.—Western Kenya Colony at Eldoma, Mt. Elgon, Mt. Gargues, and Trans Nzoia, and the Keyna highlands to south east Sudan, Uganda to the east side of the Ruwenzori Mts., the islands in Lake Victoria, Oldeani, and Loliondo meeting the next race at Karema and Uvinza in west Tanganyika Territory.

*Anthreptes collaris phillipsi* new race.

✓ *Description*.—Nearest to *A.c. garguensis* Mearns and very deep bright yellow below, but the yellow a little clearer; the females

quite distinct in having the chin and upper throat greyish, but the chest yellow.

*Measurements*.—Wing in fifteen males 55-58 mm.

*Type*.—In the British Museum, Female: Lofu River, Northern Rhodesia, collected by S. A. Neave, 17 August, 1908. Brit. Mus. Reg. No. 1909.11.21.225.

*Distribution*.—From the south end of Lake Tanganyika across the plateau of Northern Rhodesia to Mwinilunga and south to Mumbwa and Mpika west of the Luangwa valley; north into the Katanga region of the Belgian Congo and west to Cazombo in East Angola.

*Anthreptes collaris djamdjamensis* Benson, 1942.  
Alghe, Abyssinia.

Differs from *A.c. elachior* in being a brighter clearer yellow below in both sexes with no olive on flanks and with a strongly yellow throat in the female which distinguishes at once from the last two races. Wing in seven males 52.5-54 mm.

*Distribution*.—Southern Abyssinia from Alghe to the Sagan River in the south west and Daua Parma River in the south east.

*Anthreptes collaris hypodilus* Jardine, 1851. Fernando Po, of which I regard *A.c. somereni* Chapin, 1949, Lake Azingo, Gabon, as a synonym.

The palest of all races below, the flanks dusky olive which colour tends to make the pale yellow underside look dusky. Wing in six males from Fernando Po 54-56, one 59 mm.

*Distribution*.—Fernando Po, south Cameroon and the Congo River basin east to the west side of the Ruwenzori Mts., the Welle River and south west Sudan and south to the Kasai River at Luluabourg and Chikapa and to Angola north of the Cuanza River valley.

*Note*.—It is true that birds from Gabon and south Cameroon are small with wings in males 50-54 mm in seven examined but they increase in size further east to 53-56 mm in the north east Belgian Congo. The bills in Fernando Po birds are long 16.5-19 mm. and short on the opposite mainland, i.e. 15-17.5 mm., but run to 18 mm. in the north east Belgian Congo. For these reasons I do not think that birds from Fernando Po can be separated from the mainland birds. I can see no difference in colour.

*Anthreptes collaris subcollaris* Hartlaub, 1857. Senegal.

Underside with strongly olive flanks and a very rich yellow centre to the underside, becoming almost orange in males. Wing in ten males 47-52 mm.

*Distribution*.—Portuguese Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone to the Ivory Coast, meeting the next race in the Gold Coast. Records from Senegal and Gambia are doubtful.

*Anthreptes collaris nigeriae* new race.

*Description*.—Nearest to the last race, *A.c. subcollaris* but males always paler below without the strong orange wash on the breast; the females markedly paler and more yellow, less orange below.

*Type*.—In the Brit. Mus.; Male collected at Owerri, South-east Nigeria, on 25 January, 1949, by S. Marchant. Brit. Mus. Reg. No. 1949.33.71.

*Distribution*.—Nigeria from Owerri westwards meeting the last race in the Gold Coast.

*Note*.—Though this race has the characters of both *A.c. hypodilus* and *A.c. subcollaris*, it could not correctly be referred to *A.c. hypodilus* and is too pale to be *A.c. subcollaris*.

### Notes on Eastern African Birds

Captain C. H. B. GRANT and Mr. C. W. MACKWORTH-PRAED sent the following four notes:—

- (1) On the status of *Pycnonotus tricolor chyulu* Van Someren, Journ. E.A.U. Nat. Hist. Soc. 14, p. 60, 1939: Chyulu Hills, south-eastern Kenya Colony:—

Through the kindness of the Coryndon Memorial Museum, Nairobi, the British Museum has received the type, two adult and one young specimen of this race. We have carefully compared them with the series of *Pycnonotus dodsoni* Sharpe, in the National Collection and are quite unable to see that they differ in any way.

We agree with Friedmann, Bull. 153, U.S. Nat. Mus., p. 105, 1937, that *P. dodsoni* is a distinct species and we fail to see how a bird with a white spot on the side of the neck and a mottled chest can be said by some authors to be a race of another species. To do so is in our opinion creating a confusion which will be the more difficult to sort out if authors continue to give more racial names and attach the whole lot to *P. tricolor*.

- (2) On the status of *Phyllastrephus fischeri chyuluensis* Van Someren, Journ. E.A.U. Nat. Hist. Soc. 14, p. 66, 1939: Chyulu Mts., south-eastern Kenya Colony:—

Through the kindness of the Trustees of the Coryndon Memorial Museum, Nairobi, the British Museum has received the type and five specimens of this race and we have compared them with the large series in the National Collection.

We are quite unable to see that they differ in any way from this series and therefore place *Phyllastrephus fischeri chyuluensis* Van Someren, as a synonym of *Phyllastrephus fischeri placidus* Shelley.

- (3) On the status of *Arizelocichla milanjensis chyulu* Van Someren Journ. E.A.U. Nat. Hist. Soc. 14, p. 64, 1949: Chyulu Mts., south-eastern Kenya Colony:—

Through the kindness of the Trustees of the Coryndon Memorial Museum, Nairobi, the British Museum has received the type and five specimens of this race. We have carefully compared them with the series in the British Museum and find that they agree with specimens from Tanganyika Territory to Nyasaland. The characters given are to be found in the series examined which show some slight variation in the colour of the under wing coverts and inner edges of flight feathers. The wing measurements of the series examined are 89-106 mm. which cover the measurements given for this race.

We therefore place *Arizelocichla milanjensis chyulu* Van Someren, as a synonym of *Arizelocichla milanjensis striifacies* (Reichenow & Neumann).

- (4) On the status of *Chlorocichla flaviventris chyulensis* Van Someren, J.E.A.U. Nat. Hist. Soc. 14, p. 68, 1939: Chyulu Range, south-eastern Kenya Colony.

Through the kindness of the Trustees of the Coryndon Memorial Museum the British Museum has received the type and we have had the loan of a specimen of this race and have compared it with the series in the British Museum. We are unable to see that it differs in any way from many specimens of *Chlorocichla flaviventris centralis* Reichenow, from as far south as northern Portuguese East Africa, and therefore place *Chlorocichla flaviventris chyulensis* Van Someren as a synonym of *Chlorocichla flaviventris centralis* Reichenow.

## On the Scientific Name of the European Spotted Flycatcher

Captain C. H. B. GRANT and Mr. C. W. MACKWORTH-PRAED sent the following note:—

In the 'Auk,' p. 457, 1935, Brodkord has decided that *Muscicapa striata* (Pallas) is pre-occupied by *Muscicapa striata* Forster, as Richmond, Smith. Misc. Coll. Wash. 47, pt. 3, p. 345, 1905, has placed Pallas's specific name under the genus *Muscicapa*.

Brodkord's decision cannot be upheld as Pallas's specific name is 1764 and Forster's 1772, and they used different combinations, i.e. *Motacilla striata* Pallas, in Vroeg. Cat. Verz. Vög. Adumb. p. 3, 1764, and *Muscicapa striata* Forster, Philo. Trans. 62, art. 29, p. 406, 1772.

The date of Pallas's specific name is not altered by its being placed in another genus, and as the Spotted Flycatcher is now placed by authors in the genus *Muscicapa*, it is *Muscicapa striata* Forster 1772 that is preoccupied by *Muscicapa striata* (Pallas) 1764 and not vice versa.

## Notices

### STOCK OF THE " BULLETIN ".

It is proposed to reduce the stock of the " Bulletin," but before this is done members are given an opportunity to acquire parts at 2/6 each. Applications should be made to W. E. Glegg, Esq., Zoological Museum, Tring, Herts. No reply will be sent if parts are not available.

### PUBLICATION OF THE " BULLETIN ".

Members who make a contribution at a Meeting should hand the M.S. to the Editor at that Meeting. As the proofs will be corrected by the Editor, it is essential that the M.S. should be correct and either typed or written very clearly with scientific and place names in block letters. The first mention of a scientific name should be spelt out in full, i.e., genus, specific name, racial name (if any), and author. Any further mention of the same name need only have the initial letter of the genus and no further mention of the author.

If no M.S. is handed to the Editor at the Meeting, a note will be inserted mentioning the contribution.

### DINNERS AND MEETINGS FOR 1950.

18 January; 15 February; 22 March; 19 April; 17 May; 5 July; 18 October; 15 November, 20 December.

### NEXT MEETING.

The next Meeting of the Club will take place on Wednesday, 18th October, 1950, at the Rembrandt Hotel, Thurloe Place, S.W.7, preceded by a Dinner at 6.30 p.m.

**PURCHASED**

11 SEP 1950



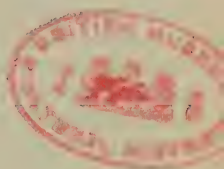
# BULLETIN

OF THE

## BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

Volume 70.  
No. 7.

PURCHASED  
17 JUL 1950



The four-hundred and ninety-sixth meeting of the Club was held at the Rembrandt Hotel, Thurloe Place, S.W.7, on Wednesday, 18th October, 1950, following a dinner at 6.30 P.M.

*Chairman:* SIR PHILIP MANSON BAHR.

*Members:*— Miss C. M. ACLAND; F. J. F. BARRINGTON; Dr. G. BEVEN; Lt.-Col. H. C. BROWNLOW; D. BUSHELL; Mrs. G. M. CHADWYCK-HEALEY; Miss T. CLAY; R. PRESTON DONALDSON; J. FISHER; Miss C. E. GODMAN; Miss EVA M. GODMAN; Capt. C. H. B. GRANT (*Editor*); Mrs. B. P. HALL; P. A. D. HOLLAM; Mrs. V. JOHNSTONE; Miss E. P. LEACH; Miss C. LONGFIELD; Mrs. D. LOWE; J. D. MACDONALD; C. W. MACKWORTH-PRAED; Col. R. MEINERTZHAGEN; Lt.-Col. W. A. PAYN; Miss G. M. RHODES; Dr. W. A. RICHARDS; Hon. Mrs. W. A. RICHARDS; Lt.-COMDR. C. P. STAPLES; Mrs. C. P. STAPLES; N. J. P. WADLEY (*Hon. Secretary*); C. N. WALTER (*Hon. Treasurer*); A. WILLIAMS; C. DE WORMS; Col. O. E. WYNNE.

*Guests:*— Miss E. M. GROSSMITH; J. H. GUNN; H. P. H. JOHNSON; R. E. MOREAU; G. H. C. TAYLOR; Mrs. G. H. C. TAYLOR; Mrs. N. J. P. WADLEY.

33 Members; 7 Guests; Total 40.

### The Goshawk in Great Britain

Colonel R. MEINERTZHAGEN made the following remarks:—

The return of the Goshawk to the British Islands is worth recording. I shall call the locality X. My first evidence goes back to 1928 when I saw a pair stuffed in a cottage 15 miles from X; they were said to have been shot in 1921 at the nest; then in June, 1938, I saw a pair doing their evening flight at the same place but failed to locate the nest. Then in the spring of this year I heard a pair were nesting at X and I

saw the adults and nest. Local and reliable information goes to show that at least five adults were seen at X in March and that at least two pair were nesting in the neighbourhood. Yet another pair were nesting at 15 miles from X. I also learned that a pair attempted to nest in 1948 but failed to do so owing to one of the birds being shot; this specimen is preserved. In 1949 young were successfully hatched at X and this year, at least one bird was successfully weaned.

In all, three pair of Goshawks bred at and near X this year but with what success I am unable to discover. It is quite possible that goshawks have nested in this district for many years for there were, until quite recently, two cases of stuffed birds in local cottages, both reputed to be well over 25 years old. A reliable informant states that Goshawks have certainly bred in the district for the past twelve years.

I think goshawks are well able to look after themselves provided game-keepers and shooting tenants do not molest them. They are secretive birds, living mainly in thick woods and taking their prey from a stationery position, watching and pouncing. At locality X the main food appears to be wood-pigeon. There are few rabbits but lots of pheasants, but these feed outside the woods and I doubt if many are taken, despite the natural accusations of game-keepers whose main concern is pheasants and not goshawks. Goshawks almost always carry their prey to a branch; sparrowhawks usually feed on the ground.

Both sexes build the nest, sticks being carried parallel to the axis of the body in much the same way as an osprey carries his fish. The hen incubates and sits very tight but once driven off remains off for some time; and that is the opportunity of carrion crows; well meaning photographers and bird lovers must be discouraged from visiting the nest when the hen is sitting.

It is a habit for goshawks, on fine evenings, to soar well up over their woods and indulge in an evening flight; as many as six sometimes taking part in the exercise; in Estonia, where goshawks are common but rarely seen, this evening flight is always accompanied by all the hooded crows in the neighbourhood who make half-hearted attempts to mob and rag the hawks.

It is my experience in Estonia and Germany that goshawks require about five square miles of territory; and this is borne out by what I have seen in the British Islands.

The protection of these goshawks is of the utmost importance not only to the R.S.P.B., to every member of the B.O.U., but mainly to posterity. That brings me to the question of bird protection. I am not referring to the commoner hedge-row, crop-land and woodland species; I refer mainly to our more decorative birds, our rarer and localised populations and to those birds which are classed as vermin.

Reduction of Bird Populations is due to several causes.

1. The breaking up of large estates. That is an unavoidable tragedy, the only remedy being transference to the National Trust and this is not always practicable.

2. Changes in ecological conditions, draining of swamps, cutting down primeval timber, mechanised farming and advances in civilisation including the urbanisation of rural districts. National Parks and Sanctuaries are the only remedy.
3. Commercialisation. This scarcely applies in Britain, though there are cases, especially among sea-birds, where wholesale egg-collecting for the market or wholesale slaughter for food, may imperil a species. Each instance must be dealt with on its merits, avoiding sentimentality and without antagonising other interests.
4. Indiscriminate egg-collecting especially by those who get pleasure out of gloating over cabinets full of rare birds' eggs without any scientific dividend. Such offenders defy the law and nothing short of a well-deserved death penalty will deter their activities. But I am thankful to say the type is almost gone largely due to public opinion and education.
5. The skin collector is not a serious menace provided the hobby is carried out reasonably. A gentleman recently collected over one hundred wrens from a single district; and another gentleman wrote me from Scotland asking if I could obtain for him a small series of Dartford Warbler, Red Kite and Honey Buzzard in exchange for British Dotterel, Snow Bunting and Golden Eagle; these are the types which I would sooner exterminate rather than imperil the status of a rare bird.

The shooting of American vagrants or of Arctic vagrants such as Hawk Owl or Waxwing does no harm whatever but must be discouraged as it deprives others of seeing these rare birds; on the other hand, certain identification of birds new to the British List have a scientific value and must not be altogether stopped.

6. I now come to the two main causes of the disappearance or threatened disappearance of our rare birds and the sad diminution in numbers of many of our commoner birds.

First, second-class game birds—geese, duck, woodcock and snipe. These birds are already suffering from the commercial egg-taking in northern Europe. In Lappland and Arctic Russia every egg, if found, is taken. But in this country we still have the organised shoot, shooting as much for the "bag" as for the pleasure of killing. I have nothing to say against the man who shoots for the pot or the lone sportsman or small group who go rough shooting and do not kill more than they can carry. But I criticise the organised shoot, where birds are fed to attract them in, and where record bags are aimed at. Men who shoot 70 pink-footed geese at a sitting, parties who boast of their 300 duck in a day; that is the type I condemn.

I believe this menace can be met by,

1. A shorter open season or in some cases a completely closed season.

2. Severe limitations to bags as in the U.S.A.
3. More sanctuaries for wildfowl.
7. Finally I come to the greatest sinners of all—the game-keepers and shooting tenants who have a game-keeper's mentality. "Vermin" is the word they use for most of the attractive birds and beasts of the countryside. All hawks, owls, most of the crow tribe, kingfishers, dabchicks, heron, otters, badgers and in fact any animal which at some time in its existence has threatened a game bird.

The myth that large quantities of game can only exist where vermin are exterminated is exploded. On many estates in Hampshire and Norfolk where the keeper has gone and where 'vermin' have increased, just as many partridges and pheasants have been shot since the war as before the war. I can also speak from personal experience in Scotland. In 1920 two adjacent estates in Ross-shire, totalling 25,000 acres, forbade the killing of any vermin but rats and Lesser Black-backed Gulls. Most of the ground was deer forest and part of the estate went up to over 3,000 feet. The yield of grouse rarely exceeded 600 brace and about a hundred pheasants and partridges were killed. No eagles bred, one pair buzzard bred, a few hooded crows, no magpies, no kestrels, perhaps two pair of sparrowhawk and no ravens, peregrines or merlin. By 1932, a pair of eagles bred regularly, four pair of buzzard, a pair of peregrine, two pairs of ravens and many merlin, kestrel and sparrowhawk; magpies returned, and the stoats and weasels completely cleared the farms of rats. Rabbits became a plague, the two estates were yielding over 1,000 brace of grouse besides large bags of pheasant, partridges and many capercailzie; hares were killed to the extent of over 600 in the year; and we had more snow bunting, dotterel and golden plover than other estates of that size.

An even better example comes from a 4,000 acre estate near Uppsala in Sweden. The owner never shoots nor does he approve of others shooting. The estate swarms with magpies, hooded crows, jays, gulls, two species of owl, kestrel, sparrowhawk, foxes, stoats and weasels. A pair each of Osprey, Buzzard and Marsh Harrier also nest. And yet the estate is overrun with pheasants, partridges, mallard, gadwall, tufted duck and wigeon, and a good few capercailzie; and there are more small passerines about than one sees even in this country.

## Ornithological Notes on a world tour, with special reference to Fiji.

Sir PHILIP MANSON BAHR gave a most interesting Talk on his tour and mentioned the many birds he had seen. He exhibited several water coloured sketches and a few bird skins.

## On the correct name of the Golden Plover.

Colonel R. MEINERTZHAGEN sent the following note:—

Linnaeus in *Fauna Svecica* 1746, No. 156 refers to Rudbeck's Plate when describing the Golden Plover. In that same year he visited Oeland Island where he handled a Golden Plover. In 1758 he describes *Charadrius apricarius* giving as type-locality Oeland and Canada but does not mention Rudbeck's Plate. He did not do so, because he quotes *Fauna Svecica* where Rudbeck's Plate is mentioned.

Under these circumstances we should regard Rudbeck's Plate as the bird intended by Linnaeus to illustrate his *Charadrius apricarius*, and Oeland as the type locality.

Rudbeck's Plate is without doubt the Northern race of Golden Plover. I have seen the plate and compared it with Lapland birds. Also it is certain that the southern race of Golden Plover breeds in Oeland and also that the northern race passes through in spring in full breeding plumage. I have specimens of both from Oeland.

In 1921 Mrs. MEINERTZHAGEN described the southern race as *Pluvialis apricarius oreophilos*, using *C. a.apricarius* L. for the northern race with type locality Oeland.

In 1924 the B.O.U. List Committee, basing their views on the fact that the southern race breeds in Oeland, upset this clear-cut arrangement, giving the name *P. apricarius* to the southern race and *P. altifrons* Brehm to the northern race, ignoring Rudbeck's Plate and unaware that the northern race also occurs in Oeland on passage. Lonnberg (*Ibis* 1924, pp. 388-390) opposes the List Committee's findings, claiming that Linnaeus' original description is not based on a bird from Oeland and that Rudbeck's Plate is the type.

I do not accept Rudbeck's Plate as the type, which is the specimen Linnaeus handled in Oeland and which no longer exists. But I do accept Oeland as the type locality.

Linnaeus' description might refer to either race but "*latera colli versus thoracem alba*" fits the northern race better than the southern.

In my *Birds of Egypt* I criticised the List Committee for causing confusion; they replied (*Ibis* 1932 p. 96) giving fuller reasons for their decision and still ignoring the fact that both races occur in Oeland and claiming that Rudbeck's picture is "secondary" to the "full" description of the Oeland bird in Linnaeus' *Systema*.

Under these circumstances, I prefer to accept Lonnberg's authoritative ruling, retaining *C. a. apricarius* for the northern race: type locality Oeland and designating as neo-type an ad. male Oeland. 30.May.1950 in my collection. The type of *C. a. oreophilos* from Orkney is in the British Museum.

## A Collection from Chiperoni Mountain, Portuguese East Africa.

Mr. C. W. BENSON sent the following:—

Through the kindness of Mr. P. K. O'Riordan, District Commissioner at Mlanje, Nyasaland, and the Portuguese administrative officials at Mlange and Mtolola, Portuguese East Africa, I was able to arrange for my collector, Jali Makawa, to spend a week on Chiperoni Mountain, from 25 to 31 July 1950.

According to War Office map, G.S. G.S. no. 2136, 1906, the summit of Chiperoni is 7,191 feet above sea-level, and is thirty-seven miles, practically due south of Mlanje Mountain.

Jali Makawa reports that on the eastern slopes of Chiperoni there is an evergreen forest much more extensive than any existing to-day in southern Nyasaland, the largest of which is perhaps that on Cholo Mountain, of area about three square miles. In this Chiperoni forest, at an approximate altitude of 5,000 feet, the following were collected, at least one specimen of each. These have been presented to the British Museum. Species and races apparently new to Portuguese East Africa are marked with an asterisk:— *Arizelocichla m.milanjensis* (Shelley); *Phyllastrephus flavostriatus vincenti* Grant and Mackworth-Praed; *Batis capensis dimorpha* (Shelley); *Trochocercus a.albonotatus* Sharpe; *Geokichla g.gurneyi* (Hartlaub); *Alethe c. choloensis* \*W. L. Sclater; *Dessonornis a. anomala* \*(Shelley); *Seicercus ruficapilla johnstoni* W. L. Sclater; *Sathrocercus mariae granti*\* (Benson); *Apalis melanocephala tenebricosa*\* Vincent; *Apalis chariessa*\* (Reichenow; *Coracina caesia pura*\* (Sharpe); *Chlorophoneus nigrifrons*; *Oriolus c. chlorocephalus*\* Shelley; *Cinnyris mediocris fülleborni* Reichenow; *Coracina caesia pura*\* (Sharp); *Chlorophoneus nigrifrons*; *Cryptospiza reichenovii australis* Shelley. I am indebted to Captain C. H. B. Grant for checking these identifications.

Jali Makawa also reported seeing or hearing the following species, not collected:— *Columba arquatrix* Temminck and Knip); *Aplopelia larvata* (Temminck and Knip); *Tauraco livingstonii* (Gray); *Heterotrogon vittatum* (Shelley); *Buccanodon leucotis* (Sundevall); *Viridibucco* sp.; *Turdus olivaceus* Linnaeus; *Pogonocichla stellata* (Vieillot) and *Dicrurus ludwigii* (Smith). It is unfortunate that no specimen of the *Viridibucco* was obtained. The next nearest locality for this genus is Mangoche Mountain, southern Nyasaland, where *V. simplex* (Fischer and Reichenow) occurs, see "Ibis", 1944, p. 458.

## Notes on Eastern African Birds.

Captain C. H. B. GRANT and Mr. C. W. MACKWORTH-PRAED sent the following two notes:—

- (1) On the status of *Bradypterus cinnamomeus chyuluensis* Van Someren, J.E.A.U. Nat. Hist. Soc. 14, p. 92; 1939: Chyulu Range, south-eastern Kenya Colony:—

Through the kindness of the Trustees of the Coryndon Memorial Museum, Nairobi, the British Museum has received the type, and we have had on loan one other specimen of this race. We have compared these two birds with the series in the British Museum.

It is true that the type is rather more chestnut above and on chest and flanks than the majority of specimens of *S.c. rufoflavus*, but the other specimen does not differ in any way from many specimens of *Sathrocercus cinnamomeus rufoflavus* and we therefore place *Bradypterus cinnamomeus chyuluensis* Van Someren, as a synonym of *Sathrocercus cinnamomeus rufoflavus* (Reichenow).

- (2) On the status of *Bradornis pallidus chyuluensis* Van Someren, Journ. E.A.U. Nat. Hist. Soc. 14, p. 69, 1939: Chyulu Range, south-eastern Kenya Colony:—

Through the kindness of the Trustees of the Coryndon Memorial Museum, Nairobi, the British Museum has received the type and two specimens of this race. These have been compared with the series in the National Collection and we are quite unable to see any character by which they differ from *Bradornis pallidus griseus* Reichenow. They are rather lighter on the chin, throat and belly than most of the series but in this respect are matched by specimens from Suk west of Lake Rudolf, and Thika, and on the upper side agree with specimens throughout the range of *B.p. griseus*.

We therefore place *Bradornis pallidus chyuluensis* Van Someren, as a synonym of *Bradornis pallidus griseus* Reichenow.

## Notices

### STOCK OF THE "BULLETIN".

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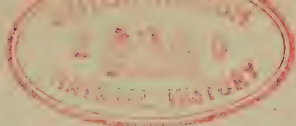
### DINNERS AND MEETINGS FOR 1950.

15 November; 20 December.

### NEXT MEETING.

The next Meeting of the Club will take place on Wednesday, 15th November, 1950, at the Rembrandt Hotel, Thurloe Place, S.W.7, preceded by a Dinner at 6.30 P.M.





# BULLETIN

## OF THE

# BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB.

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Volume 70.

No. 8.

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The four-hundred-and-ninety-eighth meeting of the Club was held at the Rembrandt Hotel, Thurloe Place, S.W.7, on Wednesday, 15th November, 1950, following a dinner at 6.30 P.M.

*Chairman:* SIR PHILIP MANSON-BAHR.

*Members present:*—Miss C. M. ACLAND; Mrs. E. BARNES; F. J. F. BARRINGTON; LT.-COL. H. C. BROWNLOW; Miss. T. CLAY; F. A. DE HAMEL; R. PRESTON DONALDSON; Miss. J. M. FERRIER; Miss E. FORSTER; Miss C. E. GODMAN; Miss EVA M. GODMAN; CAPTAIN C. H. B. GRANT (*Editor*); Mrs. B. P. HALL; Dr. J. M. HARRISON; P. A. D. HOLLAM; Miss E. P. LEACH; Miss C. LONGFIELD; J. D. MACDONALD; C. W. MACKWORTH-PRAED; COL. R. MEINERTZHAGEN (*Vice-Chairman*); Miss G. M. RHODES; Hon. Mrs. N. O. RICHARDS; Dr. W. A. RICHARDS; LT.-COMMDR. C. P. STAPLES; N. J. P. WADLEY (*Hon. Secretary*); C. N. WALTER (*Hon. Treasurer*); C. DE WORMS; COL. O. E. WYNNE.

*Guests of the Club:*—Mr. and Mrs. R. H. N. SMITHERS.

*Guests:*—Miss L. P. GRANT; Mrs. J. D. MACDONALD; Miss V. MAXSE; R. E. MOREAU; Mr. and Mrs. E. E. D. NEWMAN; A. G. B. RUSSELL; Mr. and Mrs. C. E. WOODHOUSE.

Members, 29; Guests, 11; Total 40.

## The Record of the Moustached Warbler breeding in Great Britain.

Colonel R. MEINERTZHAGEN made the following remarks and exhibited specimens:—

In the Twenty-second Report of the B.O.U. List Committee (*Ibis*, p. 639, 1950) it has been decided to accept as a breeding British bird *Luscinola melanopogon* (Temminck) with the reservation that it is a sight record. Full details of the record are given in *British Birds*, p. 98, 1947. There is no character in this exhaustive field record

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which does not equally apply to the Sedge Warbler from which the Moustached Warbler can only with certainty be identified by the first primary.

I do not for a moment doubt the sincerity of the many observers responsible for the record but I do doubt their ability to determine the Sedge from the Moustached Warbler in the field.

Furthermore, it is my experience in Iraq and Egypt that the males of the Moustached Warbler pass north in spring before the females; the chances of a female coming to Britain and finding a lone male in Cambridgeshire seems rather remote.

I am of opinion that this record should not be accepted even as a sight record.

I exhibit a box containing five of each species from which it will be seen that the dark crown and more prominent eye-stripe attributed to the Moustached Warbler is not an invariable specific character.

## The Present Status of Ornithology in Southern Rhodesia.

Mr. R. H. N. SMITHERS, Director of the National Museum of Southern Rhodesia, Bulawayo, gave a most interesting talk on the progress that has been made in the knowledge of Southern Rhodesian birds and the steps that are now being taken, including ringing, to eventually give a true picture of the ornithology of that area. He showed a short colour film of the country in the eastern part of Southern Rhodesia and along the Portuguese border. This talk and film was much appreciated by those present.

## Notes on Eastern African Birds.

Captain C. H. B. GRANT and Mr. C. W. MACKWORTH-PRAED sent the following note:—

On the status of *Turdus olivaceus chyuluensis* Van Someren, Journ. E.A.U. Nat. Hist. Soc. 14, p. 75, 1939: Chyulu Hills, south-eastern Kenya Colony:—

Through the kindness of the Trustees of the Coryndon Memorial Museum, Nairobi, the British Museum has received four specimens of this race. We have compared them with the series of all the known races in the National Collection and find that they agree perfectly with specimens of *Turdus olivaceus abyssinicus* Gmelin, from both Abyssinia and the Kenya Colony highlands. We therefore place *Turdus olivaceus chyuluensis* Van Someren, as a synonym of *Turdus olivaceus abyssinicus* Gmelin.

In coming to the above decision we have re-examined the whole series of this species in the National Collection and note that birds from Kenya Colony taken at Ravine, Njoro, Aberdares, Mt. Kenya, Mt. Kinangop, Uplands, Kikuyu and Narossura, are inclined to be slightly darker grey on the chest, but we do not consider the character

of sufficient importance to be given a new racial name and there is no name available for that area. Authors have used *Turdus elgonensis* Sharpe, Ibis, p. 445, 1891, for this area of Kenya Colony on the assumption that as a bird in the British Museum from Kikuyu is marked as a type, Mt. Elgon was not the correct type locality. This however, cannot be accepted as Sharpe clearly meant the name and the type locality to be as given in the Ibis and a description and a type locality so given must stand and have priority over a specimen which is said to be the type. We are unable to see that the Mt. Elgon specimens differ in any way from Abyssinian birds.

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### DINNERS AND MEETINGS FOR 1951.

17th January (500th Meeting); 21st February; 14th March (Joint Meeting with B.O.U.); 18th April (Annual General Meeting); 16th May; 20th June; 17th October; 21st November; 19th December.

### NEXT MEETING.

The next Meeting of the Club will take place on Wednesday, 20th December, 1950, at the Rembrandt Hotel, Thurloe Place, S.W.7, preceded by a Dinner at 6.30 p.m.

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# BULLETIN

OF THE

## BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB.

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Volume 70.

No. 9.

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### SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

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A Special General Meeting of the Club was held at the Hotel Rembrandt at 6 P.M. on Wednesday, the 15th November, 1950.

SIR PHILIP MANSON-BAHR *in the Chair*.

Members present—17.

1. The Minutes of the last Special General Meeting were passed as correct and signed by the Chairman.
2. The Rules of the Club were amended as follows :—
  - (a) Title and Objects Clause—by deleting the words “Social intercourse” and substituting the words “Scientific discussion.”
  - (b) Rule 7—by deleting the word “January” and substituting the word “April.”

The Hon. Treasurer explained that the Board of Inland Revenue had agreed that with amendment (a) they would allow the Club the benefit of income tax rebates in regard to Deeds of Covenant given by members for future annual subscriptions : and that (b) would enable the accounts to be circulated to members before the Annual General Meeting in April.

### ORDINARY MEETING.

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The four-hundred-and-ninety-ninth meeting of the Club was held at the Rembrandt Hotel, Thurloe Place, S.W.7, on Wednesday, 20th December, 1950, following a dinner at 6.30 P.M.

*Chairman* : SIR PHILIP MANSON-BAHR.

*Members* : Miss C. M. ACLAND ; Miss P. BARCLAY SMITH ; F. J. F. BARRINGTON ; Lt.-Col. H. G. BROWNLOW ; Hon. G. L. CHARTERIS ; Miss E. FORSTER ; Capt. C. H. B. GRANT (*Editor*) ; Mrs. B. P. HALL ; P. A. D.

HOLLOM ; Mrs. V. JOHNSTONE ; Dr. DAVID LACK ; Miss C. LONGFIELD ; C. W. MACKWORTH-PRAED ; J. H. MCNEILE ; Dr. J. F. MONK ; H. J. R. PEASE ; J. POOLE ; Miss G. M. RHODES ; Hon. Mrs. N. O. RICHARDS ; Dr. W. A. RICHARDS ; PETER SCOTT ; Lt.-Comdr. C. P. STAPLES ; Dr. A. LANDSBOROUGH THOMSON ; Mrs. P. V. UPTON ; N. J. P. WADLEY (*Hon. Secretary*) ; C. N. WALTER (*Hon. Treasurer*) ; C. DE WORMS ; Col. O. E. WYNNE.

*Guest of the Club* : Mrs. DAVID LACK.

*Guests* : C. C. BALCH ; R. F. BRETHERTON ; R. W. CROWE ; Mrs. HARRISON ; Mrs. C. W. MACKWORTH-PRAED ; Lady MANSON-BAHR ; Mrs. R. POOLE ; Mrs. E. RILEY ; Mrs. A. L. THOMSON.

Members, 29 ; Guest of the Club, 1 ; Guests, 9 ; Total, 39.

Mr. B. W. TUCKER.

The Chairman announced the death of Mr. B. W. TUCKER on the 19th, and the Members present stood in silence to his memory.

### Migration through the Pyrenees.

Dr. DAVID LACK gave the following talk :—

My wife and I visited the Pyrenees in late September and October 1949 and 1950, to see whether migration occurs through the high mountains, and if so, how the birds react, and whether there is a concentration of migrants on the west coast between the mountains and the sea.

*Birds of Prey* were seen passing south through the high mountains in small numbers, chiefly in the middle hours of the day when soaring vultures and choughs denoted the presence of up-currents. Sparrowhawks (*Accipiter nisus* Linnæus) were the commonest species, with some harriers (*Circus* spp.) and kites (*Milvus milvus* Linnæus) and *M. migrans* (Boddært).

Swallows (*Hirundo rustica* Linnæus) were moving south in immense and quite uncountable numbers up the Gavarnie valley on September 23rd, 1949, travelling only a few feet above the ground against a head wind in mild rain after a thunderstorm. On reaching the 3-4,000 feet precipices of the Cirque, which obstruct the way south, they spiralled upwards until they passed out of sight. Later, mist came down on the high passes, and the Swallows then passing turned back north down the valley, and for a while two streams, one low southward, the other higher and northward, were passing each other. In 1950, at the same place but with a tail wind, the Swallows were migrating south at the height of the peaks, right above the valley. Likewise in the Eastern Pyrenees near Bourg-Madame we saw a big southward migration in a tail wind, the birds flying (and sometimes circling) high along the peaks, and moving independently of the valley systems. These and other data confirm Dutch observations that migrants fly much higher with a tail than a head wind.

Wood Pigeons (*Columba palumbus* Linnæus) passed south chiefly in the Low Pyrenees, though we also saw flocks of up to several hundreds at Gavarnie, where they made repeated attempts to rise above the Cirque but eventually flew off west-south-west to cross at a lower pass, accepting this temporary deflection from their standard direction very uneasily. At the palombières in the Low Pyrenees, the migrating pigeons are attracted down to the nets by the throwing of white discs, which presumably simulate the white wing-bar and release the alighting response of the pigeons. (They have previously been described as simulating hawks). On one occasion we saw 5,300 pigeons pass in half an hour.

*Passerine night migrants* (warblers, flycatchers, redstarts, etc.) were in huge numbers near the west coast in late September 1949. This was not a funnelling due to the mountains, as the mountains start three miles from the coast and the high density of birds extended at least thirty miles inland. We interpret it as due to the migrants from north Europe having a standard direction south west, which brings them into this area, and has the advantage later of bringing them to the shortest sea crossing of the Mediterranean, near Gibraltar. We found no comparable concentration of migrants on the east coast in late September 1950. (Birds from northern Europe evidently do not come this way, birds from Central Europe may well do so, but later in the autumn).

In October 1950, we established that small passerine birds, including Chaffinch (*Fringilla cœlebs* Linnæus), Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis* (Linnæus)), Linnet (*C. cannabina* (Linnæus)) and Serin (*Serinus canarius* (Linnæus)), with a few White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba* Linnæus), Meadow Pipit (*Anthus pratensis* Linnæus) and Short-toed Lark (*Calandrella brachydactyla* Leisler), were migrating over the Porte de Gavarnie at 7,500 feet. These birds presumably had a standard direction just west of south, but were temporarily deflected west-south-west by the Cirque, like the Wood Pigeons and, sometimes, the Swallows. This passage was at its height in the early afternoon and 795 small passerines passed in three hours.

The four finch species mentioned in the preceding paragraph were moving south on a broad front between the High Pyrenees and the west coast north of Bayonne, but those travelling along the coast itself left it where it turns west of south and proceeded inland, so that they were not seen in the "corner" of the Bay of Biscay, near St. Jean de Luz. In late October there was, however, another and vastly bigger Chaffinch migration along the coast, with a peak passage in the early morning and a standard direction of south west, which meant that they kept to the coast until they were half way round the "corner" and struck inland by St. Jean de Luz. This migration continued strongly even in a gale and extremely heavy rain. We suggest that they may be Chaffinches from north-western Europe, the others with a standard direction of south perhaps being from France itself. In the peak movement, 6,000 passed in half an hour.

Tree Sparrows (*Passer montanus* Linnæus) and Blue Tits (*Parus cæruleus* Linnæus) also migrated along the west coast, continuing right round the "corner" and being last seen flying due west at Hendaye. We

suppose that they were birds from Central Europe with a standard direction of west. On reaching the  $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile gap in the coast caused by the bay at St. Jean de Luz, Blue Tits normally crossed straight over, except that single birds would get uneasy and wait for a flock before doing so. Tree Sparrows, on the other hand, were exceedingly disturbed, flying up and down, and eventually going round by the shore, though this took them temporarily southwards, away from their presumed standard direction. We counted up to 220 Blue Tits in an hour and up to 824 Tree Sparrows in 35 minutes.

We saw Skylarks (*Alauda arvensis* Linnæus) and Grey Geese (probably *Anser anser* Linnæus) arriving from the sea travelling just west of south, and proceeding straight on inland over the mountains. They had evidently crossed the Bay of Biscay on a fairly broad front, which extended at least from Vieux Boncau to Hendaye. They arrived at all hours of the day, Skylarks being commonest soon after dawn, when we once saw 1,000 in half an hour. At Hendaye, Skylarks going nearly south sometimes met Tree Sparrows going west, and then one species might travel in the "wrong" direction with the other for a few minutes, but they soon separated again. Another example of the "infectious" nature of migratory flight was seen when 13 Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax carbo* Linnæus) and later a Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia* Linnæus) attached themselves to, and flew south with, twenty migrating Grey Geese.

Small parties of Cranes (*Megalaruis grus* Linnæus) were seen flying along the coast north of Bayonne, but like various other species they left the coast where it turns west, and kept on inland over the mountains into Spain. Their standard direction was south, or just west of south, but in the first part of their journey from Scandinavia it is known that they travel south-west, so at some point they must change direction.

We hope to discuss the theoretical implications of our work after at least one more autumn visit, and hope that this talk will stimulate others to make parallel observations, not in the Pyrenees (which might get overcrowded, and where the broad outlines are now clear), but elsewhere in France and Spain. We would particularly recommend the coast between Arcachon and Bayonne, where there must be huge concentrations, the general region of Gibraltar, also Brittany, and (after mid-October) the Rhône valley and the east coast near Argelès-sur-Mer and Banyuls.

My expenses on the 1950 visit were largely defrayed by a grant from the Royal Society.

### Notes on Eastern African Birds.

Captain C. H. B. GRANT and Mr. C. W. MACKWORTH-PRAED sent the following three notes:—

(1) On the status of *Seicercus ruficapillus mbololo* Van Someren, J. E. A. U. N.H. Soc. 14, p. 91, 1939: Mt. Mbololo, eastern Taita Range, south-eastern Kenya Colony.

Through the kindness of the Trustees of the Coryndon Memorial Museum, Nairobi, the British Museum has received the type and we have had the loan of two specimens of this race. We have compared these with the series in the British Museum collection and find they agree perfectly with specimens as far south as Kilosa and the Uluguru Mts. We therefore place *Seicercus ruficapillus mbololo* Van Someren, as a synonym of *Seicercus ruficapillus minulla* (Reichenow).

(2) On the status of *Eremomela scotops kikuyuensis* Van Someren, J. E. A. U. N. H. Soc. 37, 1930, p. 195 : Nairobi, Kenya Colony.

Through the kindness of Dr. Van Someren we have had on loan four specimens of this race, and having studied Van Someren's note in Bull. B.O.C. 64, p. 51, 1944, we have compared them with the series in the British Museum collection. These four birds agree perfectly with specimens from the Usambara Mts., and Kilosa, and we therefore place *Eremomela scotops kikuyuensis* Van Someren, as a synonym of *Eremomela scotops occipitalis* (Fischer and Reichenow). We agree with Dr. Van Someren that they are not *Eremomela scotops citriniceps* (Reichenow). (3) On the status of *Seicercus umbrovirens chyulu* Van Someren, J. E. A. U. Nat. Hist. Soc. 14, p. 89, 1939 : Chyulu Range, south-eastern Kenya Colony :—

Through the kindness of the Trustees of the Coryndon Memorial Museum, Nairobi, the British Museum has received six specimens of this race. We have compared them with the series of *Seicercus umbrovirens mackenziana* (Sharpe) in the National Collection and find that they are matched in colour with specimens from Mt. Nyiro, Mau, Aberdare Mts., and North Paré Mts. At Nyiro Mt., Mau and the Aberdare Mts., we find paler birds alongside dark specimens. We are unable to see how the Chyulu Hills birds can be separated and therefore place *Seicercus umbrovirens chyulu* Van Someren as a synonym of *Seicercus umbrovirens mackenziana* (Sharpe).

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January 17th (500th Meeting); February 21st; March 14th (Joint Meeting with B.O.U.); April 18th (Annual General Meeting); May 16th; June 20th; October 17th; November 21st; December 19th.

## NEXT MEETING.

The next Meeting of the Club will take place on Wednesday, 17th January, 1951, at the Rembrandt Hotel, Thurloe Place, S.W.7, preceded by a Dinner at 6.30 P.M.

## CORRIGENDA.

## VOL. 69.

Pages 126-135, line 1 : for " 1950 " read " 1949."

## VOL. 70.

Page 7, line 9 : for " Trogodytes " read " Troglodytes."

Page 10, line 22 : for " (Suvdevall)" read " (Sundevall)."

Page 14, line 18 : for " G. Besek " read " G. Bevan."

Page 17, line 33 : for " Larus cacchinnans " read " Larus cachinnans."

Page 18, line 6 : for " Mr. Nöel Mayand " read " Mr. Nöel Mayaud."



# BULLETIN

OF THE

## BRITISH

# ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB



EDITED BY

CAPTAIN C. H. B. GRANT

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Volume 71

1951

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LONDON

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1952

Published February 7th

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HIGH HOLBORN, LONDON.

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## PREFACE

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NINE MEETINGS were held during the year 1951, from January to June and October to December inclusive.

Eight instead of nine Bulletins were issued, the Committee having decided to issue the December Meeting as the January 1952 number, so that the date of publication and the date on the cover shall coincide.

The Annual General Meeting took place on Wednesday, 18th April, 1951, and was attended by 25 Members.

The number of attendances at the Meetings were as follows:—  
Members of the Club 323, Guests 103, Guests of the Club 8.

The Guests of the Club were Professor E. de Beer, Professor J. Berlioz, Dr. W. H. Bierman, Dr. Julian Huxley, Miss E. Laan, Mr. J. Mavrogordato and Dr. and Mrs. T. H. Work.

C. H. B. GRANT.

*London, December, 1951.*

## COMMITTEE 1951.

- Sir PHILIP MANSON-BAHR, *Chairman* (elected 1950).  
Colonel R. MEINERTZHAGEN, *Vice-Chairman* (elected 1950).  
Captain C. H. B. GRANT, *Editor* (elected 1947).  
Mr. N. J. P. WADLEY, *Hon. Secretary* (elected 1950).  
Mr. C. N. WALTER, *Hon. Treasurer* (elected 1950).  
Lieut.-Commdr. C. P. STAPLES (elected 1948).  
Mr. R. P. DONALDSON (elected 1950).  
Colonel O. E. WYNNE (elected 1950).  
Miss C. M. ACLAND (elected 1951).

# OFFICERS OF THE BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB, PAST AND PRESENT.

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## Chairmen.

P. L. SCLATER.	1892-1913.
Lord ROTHSCHILD.	1913-1918.
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Dr. P. R. LOWE.	1927-1930.
Major S. S. FLOWER.	1930-1932.
D. A. BANNERMAN.	1932-1935.
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**Editors.**

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Captain C. H. B. GRANT.	1935-1940.
Dr. G. CARMICHAEL LOW.	1940-1945.
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Miss E. P. LEACH.	1942-1949.
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## LIST OF MEMBERS.

DECEMBER, 1951.

As for 1949, amended 1950 and as follows:—

Resigned or died during 1951:—

Major N. A. G. H. BEAL, Dr. B. CAMPBELL, Mr. F. HAVERSCHMIDT,  
Mr. E. HOPKINSON, Mr. J. V. MORLEY, Mr. C. WHYBROW.

Major A. BUXTON became an Associate member on resignation from the B.O.U. and Mr. J. POOLE and the Hon. Mrs. W. A. RICHARDS became members on joining the B.O.U.

New members in 1951:—

ALDERSON, Miss D. M.; Fairfields, Haddenham, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire.\*

BARLOW, Lt.-Cmmdr. T. E., R.N.; c/o H.M.S. Saker, c/o G.P.O., London.

CHALIF, EDWARD L.; Barnsdale Road, Short Hills, New Jersey, U.S.A.

HAWES, C. H.; 248 Hoylake Crescent, Ickenham, Middlesex.\*

HEYDER, Major H. M., M.C.; 3, Whitehall Court, London, S.W.1.\*

HURCOMB, Rt. Hon. Lord, C. W., G.C.B., K.B.E.; 47 Campden Hill Court, London, W.8.

JOHNSON, H. P. H.; B.A., F.R.G.S.; Knutsford, Oak End Way, West Byfleet, Surrey.

LIVERSIDGE, R.; 3, Park Road, Rondebosch, Cape Province, South Africa.

MACKINTOSH, D. R.; Oakwood, Bayley's Hill, Sevenoaks, Kent.

MOUNTFORT, Lt.-Col. G. R.; F.Z.S., Tower Barn, Farnham Common, Buckinghamshire.

MANSON-BAHR, Lady; The Old Cottage, Pootings, Nr. Edenbridge, Kent.\*

MUNDAY, C. G.; 38, Chittern Close, Bushey Road, Ickenham, Middlesex.\*

WADLEY, Mrs. N. J. P.; 14, Elm Place, London, S.W.7.\*

WAINWRIGHT, Maj.-Gen. C. B., C.B.; Little Berechurch, Colchester, Essex.

WILLIAMS, J. G.; Coryndon Museum, Nairobi, Kenya Colony.

\* Associate Members,

## Change of addresses:—

- BOORMAN, S.; Birchley, West Clandon, Guildford, Surrey.
- BROWNLOW, Lt.-Col. H. G., R.E.; Monomark BM/DIPPER, London, W.C.1.
- BUSHELL, D. C.; Hurstbourne, Southwell Park Road, Camberley, Surrey.
- CAVE, Col. F. O.; Flat 4, 2, Ennismore Gardens, London, S.W.7.
- CUNNINGHAM, Capt. Josias.; Farnhill, Belfast, Northern Ireland.
- DEWHURST, Col. F. W.; Middle Lake, Meavy, Yelverton, Devonshire.
- FERGUSON-LEES, J.; Fordlands, Crowhurst, Sussex.
- HUNT, G. H.; Curlews, Blakeney, Norfolk.
- MONK, Dr. J. F.; Little Stow, Goring, nr. Reading, Berkshire.
- PITMAN, Lt.-Col. C. R. S., D.S.O., M.C.; Flat 9, 12 Chelsea Embankment, London, S.W.3.
- RUSSELL, J. A. S.; Copyhold Farm, Blackmore, near Ingatestone, Essex.
- RYDZEWSKI, W.; 6, Seymour Terrace, London, S.E.20.
- WORMS, CHARLES DE; Three Oaks, Shore's Road, Horsell, Surrey.

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BOUGHT  
20/1/51



# BULLETIN

OF THE

## BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB.

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**Volume 71.**

**No. 1.**

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The five-hundredth meeting of the Club was held at the Rembrandt Hotel, Thurloe Place, S.W.7, on Wednesday, 17th January, 1951, following a dinner at 6.30 P.M.

*Chairman:* SIR PHILIP MANSON-BAHR.

*Members:* Miss C. M. ACLAND; Miss P. BARCLAY SMITH; F. J. F. BARRINGTON; Lt.-Col. H. G. BROWNLOW; Mrs. G. M. CHADWYCK-HEALEY; Miss T. CLAY; F. A. DE HAMER; R. P. DONALDSON; Miss J. M. FERRIER; J. FISHER; R. S. R. FITTER; Miss E. FORSTER; W. E. GLEGG; Capt. C. H. B. GRANT (*Editor*); Dr. J. M. HARRISON; R. E. HEATH; P. A. D. HOLLOM; Sir N. B. KINNEAR; Miss E. P. LEACH; Miss C. LONGFIELD; J. D. MACDONALD; C. W. MACKWORTH-PRAED; Capt. J. H. McNEILE; Lt.-Col. G. R. MOUNTFORD; E. M. NICHOLSON; E. R. PARRINDER; H. J. R. PEASE; Lt.-Col. C. R. S. PITMAN; J. POOLE; Miss G. M. RHODES; Dr. W. A. RICHARDS; Hon. Mrs. W. A. RICHARDS; D. SETH-SMITH; Colonel R. SPARROW; Lt.-Comdr. C. P. STAPLES; Mrs. C. P. STAPLES; Lt.-Col. W. P. C. TENISON; Dr. A. LANDBOROUGH THOMSON; N. J. P. WADLEY (*Hon. Secretary*); C. N. WALTER (*Hon. Treasurer*); Maj.-Gen. C. B. WAINWRIGHT; A. WILLIAMS; C. DE WORMS; Col. O. E. WYNNE.

*Guests of the Club:* Professor G. R. DE BEER; Dr. JULIAN HUXLEY.

*Guests:* O. N. CHADWYCK-HEALEY; Lady CRAVEN; Mrs. R. S. FITTER; Miss L. P. GRANT; Miss N. J. GRANT; G. STAUGHTON HARRIS; D. L. HARRISON; Lady MANSON-BAHR; W. J. MUGGLETON; Mrs. R. POOLE; Mrs. E. SARTORIS; Mrs. W. P. C. TENISON; Mrs. A. L. THOMSON; Mrs. N. J. P. WADLEY; Mrs. C. N. WALTER; Dr. C. WILCOCKS; Mrs. C. WILCOCKS; Mrs. P. V. WILLIAMS; W. H. WILLIAMS and one other.

Members, 45; Guests of the Club, 2; Guests, 20; Total 67.

Published 14th February, 1951.

Price 2/6

## Ornithological activities of a Biologist.

Dr. G. R. de Beer hoped that he was not present under false pretences for he was no ornithologist, although he was beginning at the beginning by making a new investigation of *Archæopteryx*, using ultra-violet light. He had also had the good fortune to be intimately connected with ornithologists and particularly with his late lamented friend, B. W. Tucker with whom as an undergraduate he shared a room in Magdalen. Tucker filled the room with snakes, lizards, toads and newts, but his heart lay really in birds. Dr. de Beer recalled the foundation of the Oxford Ornithological Society which was the work of Tucker, Jourdain, Balfour, Ticehurst, and others, and he described one of the first excursions of the Club to Otmoor where, without knowing that it was a reed-bunting's, he found a nest with six eggs in it, on announcing which an ugly rush ensued, in the course of which the eggs were whisked away.

Dr. de Beer also referred to the excursions which he used to make with students of the Department of Zoology to Blenheim to make observations on the courtship activities of the great crested Grebe, on which Dr. Huxley had then recently published his paper.

Finally, Dr. de Beer referred to the great generosity of Colonel Meinertzhagen who had informed him that he had decided to bequeath his collection of palæarctic birds to the British Museum (Natural History), and he hoped that it would be a very long time before this collection came to the Museum.

## A short History of the Club.

Sir Philip Manson-Bahr gave the following talk:—

The British Ornithologists' Union (1858) had been in existence for some thirty years before it became apparent that some other organisation was necessary in order to afford its members opportunities for meeting one another more frequently than at the Annual General Meeting, and so it came about that on the 5th of October, 1892, at the instigation of that great ornithologist, Dr. R. Bowdler Sharpe, the Club—The British Ornithologists' Club—came into existence.

Primarily its object was to function as a dining club of the parent organisation where new species of birds and their eggs could be exhibited, and matters of interest discussed. The proceedings were printed in a Bulletin. Before long it had established itself as the all important scientific ornithological body in the country. The popularity of the Club was such that no less than eighty-four members of the British Ornithologists' Union at once joined its ranks. With Bowdler Sharpe as Editor of the Bulletin, Howard Saunders as Secretary and Treasurer, success was assured. The affairs of the Club were managed by a Committee of three—E. Bidwell, the Earl of Gainsborough and Henry Seebohm. It is recorded that ninety-two

communications were made at the first ten meetings which were held at the now defunct Mona Hotel, Henrietta Street, Covent Garden. The inaugural meeting was attended by fourteen members and four guests which included Degen, Pycraft, Oldfield Thomas, and Smith Woodward.

From January 18th, 1893, onwards the meetings were held continuously at Frascati's Restaurant for the next fourteen years. The names of Howard Saunders and Philip Lutley Sclater appear as Chairmen. The bearers of many historic names now appeared, amongst these were Colonel Irby, Godman, H. E. Dresser, Ogilvie Grant, Dr. Penrose, Trevor Battye, St. George Mivart, Barrett Hamilton, H. L. Bonhote, and Osbert Salvin. Some five years later Ernst Hartert became a regular attendant and the great partnership of Hartert and Rothschild became established. At that time, too, we can recall the names of G. E. Lodge, Professor Graham-Kerr as taking part in discussions and, I rejoice to say, that both are alive and active at the present day, whilst all their contemporaries whose names we revere, have joined the majority.

It was about 1900, when I was an undergraduate at Cambridge, that I became aware of the affairs of this Club at the historic Sunday evening meetings in Professor Alfred Newton's room at Magdalen which A. R. F. Wollaston has so vividly described. Newton, who had constituted himself the doyen of British ornithology, kept aloof and was not himself a member of the Club, but always a severe critic of its personnel and policy. The seeds of the great handbook were sown in the Club, so that the year 1906 looms large in its annals at this time. H. F. Witherby, who did so much for British ornithology, undertook the publication of the Bulletin free of charge. In the following year the outstanding figures were M. J. Nicoll and F. C. R. Jourdain, the former added a considerable number of new birds to the British List, whilst the latter, still fresh in our memories, was famous as an egg connoisseur.

My own personal recollections of the Club extend over some forty-four years and I joined at the same time as the Hon. E. C. Montague and Dr. C. B. Ticehurst. On October 16th, 1907, the Club dined for the first time at Pagani's in Great Portland Street, and continued there for the next twenty-five years. From 1932-1933 there was a short interval when the Knightsbridge Hotel was patronised, but since January 1934 the meetings have been held at the Rembrandt Hotel, South Kensington.

Amongst many other outstanding events we must single out the death of P. L. Sclater, a forceful Chairman, who was presented with a silver Ibis on a silver globe. Two years later he was joined by H. E. Dresser at the age of 77. During the critical days of the first world war the Bulletin included the name of Earl Grey of Falloden, and a little later that of Capt. F. C. Selous, one of the greatest

sportsmen and naturalist of his age. I must not forget to mention the services which C. H. B. Grant, and my old friend Dr. Carmichael Low have rendered to the Club.

In the first thirty years of the Club's existence women were strictly prohibited, but now (since 1922) they contribute in no small measure to our meetings.

There have been great fluctuations in the numbers of members of the British Ornithologists' Union who have joined our Club since its inception. These were by far the highest in its early days. We have still many well-known ornithologists to lead our young generation, but during the last ten years, and since the disastrous years of the recent war, the numbers have seriously declined. However, we hope the numbers will be restored, so that the Club will continue to uphold its traditional role as the cradle of ornithology.

These Club Meetings have always provided a stimulus, and many amusing incidents have been recorded. Of these perhaps the Cuckoo controversy which recurred in various guises off and on for over ten years. The battle between P. F. Bunyard and the Rev. F. C. R. Jourdain became at times so acrimonious that the Chairman had to veto it as a subject for full discussion. The cause of the rumpus can be traced to Bunyard's original "Report on Observations on the Cuckoo for the year 1926 on the basis of Mr. Scholey's Cuckoo Observations." It must be explained at this time that Edgar Chance had made a remarkable film of the Cuckoo depositing its egg in a meadow pipit's nest, a view that Bunyard, who was an expert on eggs and horticulture, countered by producing pictures of a bird in the act of swallowing its egg and regurgitating it up again.

Amongst my outstanding recollections from a host of exciting evenings, there seems to stand out that when Rothschild arrived in an open taxi with a giant model of the extinct Moa, 13 feet high, and the gaping crowd that greeted him at the entrance of Pagani's in Great Portland Street.

There was also that memorial occasion when Rothschild in endeavouring to uphold the dignity of his office by banging with the Chairman's gavel, inadvertently struck the finger-bowl and sent it spinning the length of the table between the astonished guests, only to be fielded by an agile waiter, when it was found to contain the original quota of water.

We must have more regular members, and I beg those who do not wish to fully commit themselves, to join up as Associate Members. I say this because it has been established that there are some ninety members of the B.O.U. in the London area who do not belong to their own Club, and I appeal to all to see that this matter is now put right.

## Progress in British Ornithology.

Dr. Julian Huxley gave a review of British Ornithology over the last 40 years together with some personal reminiscences. He was of opinion that ornithology was well in advance of many other branches of Zoology, and that the accumulated knowledge of both the systematist and field-worker was indeed remarkable, although there were still many openings for future students.

### Some breeding notes from Nyasaland.

Mr. C. W. BENSON sent the following:—

Unless otherwise indicated, the following notes are from within five miles of Dedza, and at an approximate altitude of 5,000 feet above sea-level. The clutches of eggs recorded will be sent in due course to Lt.-Col. C. R. S. Pitman for his collection. Each note is preceded by relevant references, under which details may be found.

*Elanus caeruleus caeruleus* (Desfontaines).

“Ibis” p. 205, 1945. C/3 fresh, 17 November.

*Tyto capensis capensis* (Smith).

“Ibis”, p. 313, 1946. C/3 fresh, parent flushed; 30 hours previously also C/3, 16 April. Nest in dense grass averaging three feet high, on edge of a dambo. Scattered over the nesting pad of grass stems were a few mantle and breast-feathers of this species. Size of eggs  $42.5 \times 31$ ,  $45 \times 30.5$ ,  $44.5 \times 31$ mm.

*Caprimulgus fervidus fervidus* Sharpe.

C/2 fresh, with female parent, ovary with no more eggs to lay, 27 October. Eggs creamy white, somewhat glossy, sparingly freckled (no zoning) extremely pale reddish brown; size  $28 \times 20$ ,  $27 \times 20$ mm. They agree with description of eggs of *Caprimulgus*, species not determined, “Ibis” p. 316, 1946.

*Hyliota australis inornata* Vincent.

A nest seen at Kapiriuta, Dedza district, Lat.  $14^{\circ} 27'S.$ , Long.  $33^{\circ} 56'E.$ , near top of a 35-foot high *Brachystegia* tree, 12 November. A cup placed in a fork, the branches of which were less than two inches thick. My collector, Jali Makawa, inspected the nest and reported it as made of lichens, and containing three young still naked. Parents closely observed by me, and distinguished beyond doubt from *H. flavigaster barbozæ* Hartlaub.

*Turdus litsipsirupa stierlingi* (Reichenow).

“Ibis” p. 480, 1931, p. 189, 1947. C/3 moderately incubated, 6 October. When taken ground-colour rich turquoise, which two months later had faded considerably.

*Thamnolea cinnamomeiventris subrufipennis* Reichenow.

"Ibis", p. 194, 1947. C/2 infertile, from nest with single, still naked, young, 31 December. A disused nest of *Hirundo abyssinica* or *H. daurica*, attached to the "roof" of an overhanging rock, occupied. The pad of rootlets and fine grass placed inside the swallow's nest was lined with hairs of klipspringer and hyrax. One egg bluish white, the other pure white, freckled with a pale reddish lilac, markings so dense at large end as to form a cap; size  $27.5 \times 19$  mm.

*Apalis murina whitei* Grant & Praed.

C/1 fresh, 12 October; C/2 fresh, 6 November; one nestling recently hatched, 22 October.

The C/1 egg, white, slightly glossed, sparingly spotted reddish and bright rufous, more thickly at large end, on scanty underlying slate purple and purplish grey; size  $17 \times 12.5$  mm. The C/2 eggs light blue, slightly glossed, boldly and uniformly spotted reddish and bright rufous, on underlying bold spots of lilac, mauve and lilac-grey, mainly at top of large end; size  $17 \times 12.5$  mm. (All these eggs already in the Pitman collection, to whom descriptions are due). Nests in plantations of Mlanje cedar, at fifteen to forty feet above ground. Similar to that of *A.f. flavigularis* Shelley, see "Ibis", fig.3, 1947.

*Sylvietta ruficapilla chubbi* Ogilvie-Grant.

"Ibis", p. 561, 1947, p. 293, 1948. C/2 fresh, with female parent, ovary with no more eggs to lay, 8 October.

*Cisticola rufilata ansorgei* Neumann.

"Ibis", p. 298, 1948. C/3 fresh, with female parent, ovary with no more eggs to lay, 8 January.

*Hirundo dimidiata marwitzi* Reichenow.

Adults seen continually feeding two young, which had conspicuous pale gapes, and only took to flight when I approached nearer than ten yards, 4 October. This actually witnessed in Portuguese East Africa, whence this species previously unrecorded.

*Hirundo daurica emini* Reichenow.

Belcher, "Birds of Nyasaland", p. 251, 1930. C/2 slightly incubated, 5 January. Size  $25.5 \times 16.5$ ,  $21.5 \times 15$  (note the difference in size, but no difference in colour or texture to suggest a parasite).

*Hirundo semirufa semirufa* Sundevall.

"Ibis", p. 113, 1949. Nest in a dambo, attached to roof of an ant-bear's hole, with three young, still naked, 7 January. Two adults seen 12 December with a fledged juvenile, much paler and with outermost rectrices very short.

*Hirundo senegalensis monteiri* Hartlaub.

Belcher, "Birds of Nyasaland", p. 252, 1930. C/2 slightly incubated, 18 December, Mitongwe, see "Ibis", pl. 1, 1940, from

crevice in baobab tree. Size  $23.8 \times 16.4$ ,  $24.3 \times 16.4$  mm. These eggs are in the Pitman collection, who sent me the measurements.

*Nectarinia kilimensis arturi* Selater.

Benson, Bull. Mus. Comp. Zool., Harvard, in press. C/1, which hatched 31 March (not taken).

*Cinnyris mediocris fülleborni* Reichenow.

C/2 heavily incubated (with female parent, which compared with description of *C.m.fülleborni* and *C.moreaui* Selater, see "Ibis", p. 646, 1950), 16 August, Dedza mountain, 7,000 feet.

Nest within evergreen forest, though only some five yards from edge, ten feet above ground, suspended from a slender twig. Thickly covered outside with green moss, on a firm framework of grass, lichen and leaf-skeletons; lined inside with flower seed pappi and feathers; entrance well supported with grass stems, especially lower part. Eggs very heavily freckled, somewhat streakily, with purplish brown on cream ground which almost completely obscured the large end; size  $18 \times 12$  mm.

*Anthreptes anchietae* (Bocage).

C/2 fresh, with female parent, ovary with no more eggs to lay, 5 October.

Nest near top of a 15-foot high tree (*Monotes africanus* (Welw.) ) on edge of *Brachystegia-Uapaca* woodland adjoining a dambo. Made of *Protea* flowers, woven with fine twigs into a compact mass, lined with brown *Protea* seed pappi, decorated outside with *Protea* seeds. Eggs bluish white, no gloss, with black spots and scrawls on underlying grey, mostly in a zone near large end; size  $17.5 \times 11.5$ ,  $18 \times 11.5$  mm.

*Salpornis spilonota salvadori* (Bocage).

"Ostrich", p. 27, 1943; "Ibis", p. 564, 1947, p. 344, 1949. C/2 fresh, 28 September. Twenty-two hours previously also C/2; brooding parent seen fed on nest by other. Eggs pale bluish green, somewhat glossy, the larger tinged with buff; freckled with brown on coalescing blotches of greyish lilac, mostly in zone near large end; size  $19.5 \times 13.5$ ,  $17.5 \times 12$  mm.

*Poliospiza gularis reichardi* Reichenow.

C/2 fresh, with female parent, ovary with no more eggs to lay, 1 October.

Nest a shallow cup of *Usnea barbata* Fries, reinforced with fine twigs; lined with rufous brown *Protea* seed pappi. Twelve feet above ground, in fork of a twenty-foot high *Brachystegia* tree. Eggs very pale bluish green, sparsely dotted and scrawled with sepia, mostly in a zone near large end; size  $18 \times 13.5$  mm.

*Spinus citrinelloides hypostictus* Reichenow.

Lynes, J.f.O., Suppl., p. 132, 1934; "Ibis", p. 119, 1936. C/2 fresh, with female parent, ovary with no more eggs to lay, 22 March.

Nest in a *Caribea* fir plantation, near top of a twenty-foot high tree. Eggs white, one slightly tinged bluish, with a few spots of dark sepia and reddish brown, and plentiful underlying blotches of greyish lilac; size  $16 \times 12.5$ ,  $15.5 \times 12.5$ mm.

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Telephone No. MONarch 8961.

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### DINNERS AND MEETINGS FOR 1951.

January 17th (500th Meeting); February 21st; March 14th (Joint Meeting with B.O.U.); April 18th (Annual General Meeting); May 16th; June 20th; October 17th; November 21st; December 19th.

### NEXT MEETING.

The next Meeting of the Club will take place on Wednesday, 21st February, 1951, at the Rembrandt Hotel, Thurloe Place, S.W.7, preceded by a Dinner at 6.30 p.m.

# BULLETIN

## OF THE

# BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB.

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Volume 71.

No. 2.

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The five-hundred and first meeting of the Club was held at the Rembrandt Hotel, Thurloe Place, S.W.7, on Wednesday, 21st February, 1951, following a dinner at 6.30 P.M.

*Chairman:* SIR PHILIP MANSON-BAHR.

*Members:*—Miss C. ACLAND; Miss P. BARCLAY-SMITH; F. J. F. BARRINGTON; Lt-Col. H. G. BROWNLOW; D. BUSHELL; Mrs. G. M. CHADWYCK-HEALEY; Miss C. E. GODMAN; Miss E. M. GODMAN; Capt. C. H. B. GRANT (*Editor*); Mrs. B. P. HALL; Dr. J. M. HARRISON; R. E. HEATH; Lord HURCOMB; Miss E. P. LEACH; Miss C. LONGFIELD; Mrs. D. LOWE; D. R. MACKINTOSH; C. W. MACKWORTH-PRAED; J. D. MACDONALD; Dr. J. F. MARK; Lt.-Cdr. C. P. STAPLES; Lt.-Col. W. P. C. TENISON; Dr. A. LANDSBOROUGH THOMSON; N. J. P. WADLEY (*Hon. Secretary*); C. N. WALTER (*Hon. Treasurer*); C. DE WORMS; Col. O. E. WYNNE.

*Guests:*—S. E. CROSSMAN; Commdr. A. M. HUGHES; Mrs. C. W. MACKWORTH-PRAED; R. E. MOREAU; A. G. B. RUSSELL; K. E. L. R. SIMMONS; F. J. WHEELER.

Members 28; Guests 7; Total 35.

### Rediscovery of the Cahow.

Miss P. BARCLAY-SMITH read the following note on behalf of Dr. R. C. MURPHY:—

Dr. Robert Cushman Murphy has asked me to report to the Club that on January 28th, 1951, he and Mrs. Murphy found the Cahow, *Pterodroma cahow* Nichols and Mowbray, thought to be extinct, breeding in the islands off Bermuda. This is believed to be the bird which existed in enormous numbers when the islands were discovered at the end of the 16th century and saved the earliest colonists from

starvation. Destruction was so great that in 1616 the Governor issued a proclamation against "the spoile of Cahowes" but when the birds were not reported again for three centuries it was thought they had disappeared. However in 1916 in the Auk (page 194) Nichols and Mowbray described as *Æstelata cahow* a bird which had been taken by Mr. Mowbray on February 22nd, 1906, from a rock crevice about twenty feet above high water, south-east side of Castle Island and up till then believed to be *Æstelata gularis* Peale, (Peale's Petrel). Nichols and Mowbray further stated that "the name 'cahow' was used by early settlers in Bermuda for an *Æstelata* abundant at Cooper's Island, a mile at the most from where the type was taken and presumably of the same species. Numerous fossil bones (including skulls) which, after comparison we believe to belong to the form here described have been found by Mr. Mowbray in various caves in the eastern end of the Bermudas, some about a half a mile from where the bird was taken".

In Peter's Check List published in 1931 the species is stated as being extinct but in 1935 a second specimen was secured by William Beebe, a bird killed against the lighthouse on Bermuda on June 8th. This was identified by Dr. Murphy as *Pterodroma cahow* and "as probably only a few days out of the burrow", making it likely that the species was still breeding in the neighbourhood.

In January, 1951, Dr. Murphy has proved that the birds are still in existence and still breeding in the Bermudas. He found ten burrows on one island, three birds were seen and handled while many more were observed in the sky. Three more occupied burrows were found on another island and one on a third. Dr. Murphy states "The cahow must apparently have soft soil or disintegrated powdered rock in which to burrow. From the end of the rock crevice they dig into soft soil and make tremendously long burrows. We could see by crawling three or four feet into the rock crevice and then turning our flashlights on that there was a petrel in it". They also found indications of habitation by cahows in other burrows, twigs dragged in by the birds and footmarks in the sand. Dr. Murphy's description of the bird is as follows "a little grey and white bird with bright pink feet. It has large brown eyes and is about the size of a pigeon only with much longer wings. On the under-part of its body it is white with grey mingled with a russet tint on its back. Across its forehead is a white band, while its beak is black. The web and tips of its toes are black".

The name Cahow is believed to be derived from the bird's call but Dr. Murphy has not yet heard this. He assumes that the birds arrive in Bermuda in November or December to nest after a long courtship and migrate again about June. The bird is of particular interest in that it is the only northern petrel known to breed in mid-winter. In order to safeguard the species Dr. Murphy suggests that the islands on which they are nesting should be declared sanctuaries and that steps should be taken to eradicate the rats which infest them.

## An Account of the British Museum South West Africa Expedition.

Mr. J. D. MACDONALD gave an account of the British Museum Expedition to the western region of South Africa in which the collection and study of birds was the main object. The party, which included Mrs. Macdonald, Mrs. B. P. Hall, and Colonel F. O. Cave, left Cape Town on November 29th, 1949, in two re-conditioned army trucks and a Land Rover. They had with them two native skimmers and a camp boy and, for the first month, a student from Cape Town University.

Their first area of exploration was Little Namaqualand and the lower reaches of the Orange River. Collecting began in earnest at Kamieskroon in the Kamiesberg Mts. just south of Springbok. Here topotypical specimens of the Cinnamon-breasted Warbler, *Euriptila subcinnamomea* (Smith), were obtained. They frequented the rocky slopes of the hills where the Cape Bunting, *Fringillaria capensis* (Linnæus), was common. They were readily distinguishable at a distance because the buntings usually alighted on top of rocks, whereas the warbler landed on the side and scrambled up, like a creeper. About fifty species were identified in this area.

Some collecting was done near Springbok, at Klipfontein, on the escarpment overlooking the coastal plains, and on the road to Port Nolloth. It was here that the Spike-heel Lark, *Certhilauda albofasciata* (Lafresnaye), was met with for the first time: it was met with frequently throughout the rest of the journey, and never twice seemed to have the same colour. A stay of about ten days near the mouth of the Orange River revealed a variety of new species; water-birds like the Grey Heron, *Ardea cinerea* (Linnæus), Egyptian Goose, *Alopochen aegypticus* (Linnæus), two sand plovers, Kittlitz and the Treble-banded, *Charadrius pecuarius* (Temminck) and *Charadrius tricollaris* (Vieillot); and a number of species in the green belt of trees and bushes fringing the river, birds like the White-eye, *Zosterops pallida* (Swainson), Cape Robin, *Cossypha caffra* (Linnæus), and the Red-eyed Bulbul, *Pycnonotus nigricans* (Vieillot).

An expedition from here was made into the mountains of the Richtersveld, but it was found to be a dry barren place and birds were very scarce.

Two other localities higher up on the Orange River were investigated, one at Violl's Drift where entry was made into South-West Africa, and the other at Assenjker, an old German fort. Bird life was much the same as lower down. From the Orange the party went north-west to explore the lower reaches of the Great Fish River. An entry into the deep canyon in which the river bed lies—there is only a seasonal flow—was made at a place called Ai Ais where hot springs attract visitors in the cooler winter months. Here in the height of summer, with temperature soaring over 100°, a pair of Treble-banded

Sand Plovers were found nesting on an exposed rock. The parents must have had some difficulty in keeping the eggs cool enough for incubation to take place.

A short time was spent in the Little Karas Mts. where noisy parties of the Rosy-faced Parrot, *Agapornis roseicollis* (Vieillot), were seen for the first time, and the first specimens of Karoo Bustard, *Heterotetrax vigorsii* (Smith), were obtained. After a few days at Keetmanshoop overhauling trucks and equipment, the party explored the Fish River again at Seehelm, and then moved south into the Huns Mts., to a lonely police post called Witputs, a place little known ornithologically, and which yielded rich material, particularly of several species of larks.

At Aus, about 100 miles further north, an interesting problem connected with the Red-back Lark, *Certhilauda albescens* (Lafresnaye), was investigated. It was proved that one form inhabits the dunes of the Namib Desert, where it lives in association with clumps of spiky *Aristida* grass, and another form inhabits the scrub areas. Dr. Austin Roberts had made a new race of the Spike-heel Lark, *Certhilauda albofasciata*, from a locality in the heart of the Tiraz Mts. The type locality was visited and a series of topotypical specimens collected.

From the Tiraz Mts. the party went on to Maltahohe and then to the Voigtsgrund dam, an artificial lake of several miles in extent, and one of the few expanses of water in the whole of South-West Africa, where open water, except in seasonal-flowing rivers, is a great rarity. Although only in existence for about twenty years it was teeming with water-birds. Eleven species of herons, storks, and egrets were identified, and nine waders, as well as Red-bill Teal, *Anas erythrorhynchos* (Gmelin), African Pochard, *Aythya erythrophthalma* (Wied), large flotillas of Cape Wigeon, *Anas capensis* (Gmelin), Coot, *Fulica cristata* (Gmelin), Lake Tern, *Chlidonias leucoptera* (Temminck), Darter, *Anhinga rufa* (Lacépède and Daudin), and Reed and White-breasted Cormorants, *Phalacrocorax africanus* (Gmelin) and *Phalacrocorax carbo lucidus* (Lichtenstein).

From here the party moved quickly to Windhoek to arrange about permits to enter restricted areas and to refit. Government officials were courteous and helpful, and on March 1st, 1950, the expedition set off in a south-westerly direction for the Naukluft Mts. and the Namib Desert. The Naukluft Mts. form a picturesque and interesting group. Here topotypical specimens of the rare Shrike-flycatcher, *Lanioturdus torquatus* (Waterhouse), were collected. They were first obtained by Sir James Alexander in 1838. Mr. Macdonald gave an account of Alexander's experiences in this area during the progress of the latter through the Kuiseb River and Walvis Bay. After a visit to the mouth of the Tsondab River, which disappears in the desert about sixty miles from the coast, a visit for which permission had to be obtained, as it lies within the forbidden diamond zone, the expedition then negotiated a crossing of the desert north

of the Kuiseb River in order to reach Walvis Bay. In the most barren and desolate area of the desert specimens of the rare Gray's Lark, *Ammomanes grayi* (Wahlberg), were obtained.

For the first time in its progress the expedition was halted on the banks of the Swakop River, swollen with the exceptionally heavy rains in the mountains around Windhoek. The trucks had to be taken across by rail, and then the party moved inland to explore the region of the Spitzkopje and Brandberg Mts. The former is a range of sharp granite peaks rising up for about 2,000 feet. In the patches of bush and scrub round its base the rare Herero Flycatcher, *Bradornis herero* (Schaneusee), was found, and in open places acquaintance was made with the Monotonous Lark, *Mirafrapasserina* (Gyldenstolpe). The Brandberg Mts. is an enormous granite boss rising up to the 8,000 foot level, and in its secluded isolation is picturesque and awe-inspiring. Around the base the Long-bill Lark, *Certhilauda curvirostris* (Hermann), was common, and its extraordinary diving flight accompanied by a loud piercing whistle were noted.

The most northerly part reached was Kamanjab, on the borders of the Kaokoveld. Here the country is undulating with numerous kopjes and is fairly heavily covered with tall bush, thick tree-growth being present only in the damp courses of stream and river. The kopjes are the home particularly of Hartlaub's Francolin, *Francolinus hartlaubi* (Bocage), and the Damara Rock-jumper, *Sphenæacus pycnopygius* (Selater).

Time did not permit any further progress to be made into the Kaokoveld and return to Windhoek was made by the direct route. After several days refitting the expedition set off across the Kalahari Desert to Bulawayo, where contact was made with Mr. R. H. N. Smithers and to Pretoria where, by kind permission of Dr. V. FitzSimons, specimens were repacked for shipment, and many of them compared with the valuable collections in the Transvaal Museum.

The distance covered was about 5,000 miles, most of it on rough and ill-defined tracks, and about six months were spent in the field. The collections are now being worked out and much of the material fills gaps in the study collection at the Museum.

A series of slides were exhibited showing the country passed through.

### On the type of *Alauda Penicillata* Gould.

Miss R. L. M. WARREN, Zoology Department, British Museum (Natural History), sent the following note:—

In the 'Catalogue of Birds in the British Museum', v. 13, p. 532, 1890, Sharpe records, under the name *Otocorys penicillata*, three Gould specimens from Erzerum, Persia, as "types of the species". This is an error which should be corrected.

When Gould described this new species in the P.Z.S., p. 126, 1837, he had before him "9 specimnes, 8 of which are distinct species", which were presented to the Zoological Society by K. E. Abbot. There could be at most only two specimens of any one species; the chances are therefore, and the inference to be drawn from the description is, that there was only one of *Alauda penicillata*.

Sharpe, apparently, makes a second error in stating that two specimens obtained by the Museum from the Zoological Society were collected by Abbot. One of these specimens only is an authentic Abbot bird: it was purchased from the Zoo in 1855—when the Museum secured as many types as could be distinguished, and this specimen was registered as a type. The second specimen came in 1858. There is no indication as to who collected it, but it may have been part of the Dickson and Ross collection from Erzerum, P.Z.S., p. 119, 1839, and it is probable that Gould may have obtained some of his birds from the same collectors. One, however, is dated 1841.

There is no doubt, therefore, that the Abbot specimen, Brit. Mus. Reg. No. 1855.12.19.13., is the type.

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January 17th (500th Meeting) February 21st; March 14th (Joint Meeting with B.O.U.); April 18th (Annual General Meeting); May 16th; June 20th; October 17th; November 21st; December 19th.

#### NEXT MEETING.

The next Meeting of the Club will take place on Wednesday, 14th March, 1951, at the Zoological Society, Regents Park, preceded by a Dinner at 6.30 P.M.



# BULLETIN

## OF THE

# BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB.

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Volume 71.

No. 3.

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The five-hundred and second meeting of the Club was held at the Zoological Society of London, Regents Park, N.W.8, on Wednesday, 14th March, 1951, following a dinner at 6.30 p.m., in conjunction with the Annual General Meeting of the British Ornithologists' Union. Dr. A. LANDSBOROUGH THOMSON, the President of the Union, took the Chair.

*Members of the Union present:*—Viscount ALANBROOKE; G. ATKINSON-WILLES; E. BANKS; T. L. BARTLETT; Miss E. V. BAXTER; R. O. BLYTH; P. E. BROWN; S. CRUMP; J. CUNNINGHAM; R. DA CUNHA; Miss M. G. DAVIES; O. J. H. DAVIES; A. A. J. FOSTER; N. R. FUGGLES-COUCHMAN; D. GOODWIN; R. GREEN; Dr. T. HARE; R. C. HOMES; E. HOSKING; D. F. LAWSON; F. A. LOWE; E. H. N. LOWTHER; J. M. D. MACKENZIE; A. L. W. MAYO; D. A. T. MORGAN; R. E. MOREAU; C. A. NORRIS; K. A. NORRIS; E. L. PARRISH; S. C. PORTER; Miss L. J. RINTOUL; Dr. K. B. ROOKE; Col. H. M. SALMON; Rev. L. C. SARGENT; M. SHARLAND; K. E. L. R. SIMMONS; Major D. A. SMITH; Brig. H. M. STANFORD; Lt.-Col. J. K. STANFORD; Miss S. M. V. TICEHURST; H. R. TUTT; R. H. WALLER; Miss R. L. M. WARREN; C. H. WELLS.

*Members of the Club present:*—Miss C. M. ACLAND; Miss P. BARCLAY-SMITH; Mrs. E. BARNES; F. J. F. BARRINGTON; Dr. G. BEVEN; Lt.-Col. H. G. BROWNLOW; D. BUSHELL; Mrs. G. M. CHADWYCK-HEALEY; Hon. G. L. CHARTERIS; Miss T. CLAY; J. FERGUSON-LEES; J. FISHER; Miss E. FORSTER; Capt. H. A. GILBERT; W. E. GLEGG; Miss E. M. GODMAN; Mrs. B. P. HALL; F. A. DE HAMEL; Dr. J. M. HARRISON; R. E. HEATH; Major H. HEYDER; Lord HURCOMB; H. P. H. JOHNSON; Sir N. B. KINNSAR; Miss C. LONGFIELD; J. D. MACDONALD; C. W. MACKWORTH-PRAED; Sir P. MANSON-BAHR; Lady MANSON-BAHR; J. H. MCNEILE; Col. R. MEINERTZHAGEN; Dr. J. F. MARK; E. M. NICHOLSON; E. R. PARRINDER; C. W. G. PAULSON; Capt. C. R. S. PITMAN; Lieut. R. A. W. REYNOLDS;

Miss G. M. RHODES; Dr. W. A. RICHARDS; Hon. Mrs. N. O. RICHARDS; D. SETH-SMITH; Lt.-Cdr. C. P. STAPLES; Dr. A. L. THOMSON; N. J. P. WADLEY; Mrs. N. J. P. WADLEY; Major-Gen. C. B. WAINWRIGHT; C. N. WALTER; Mrs. H. W. B. WATT; C. DE WORMS; Col. O. E. WYNNE.

*Guests*:—Miss AVERY; A. J. BULL; Mrs. G. L. CHARTERIS; R. M. CRASHE; Lady CRAVEN; Mrs. R. DA CUNHA; M. DAY; G. EDWARDS; J. FLOYD; Mrs. M. V. GILBERT; P. HALL; P. F. DE HAMEL; Mrs. T. HARE; D. HEATH; Mrs. R. C. HOMES; Mrs. E. HOSKING; Miss P. HURCOMB; Miss D. HURST; Miss C. JOHNSON; Mrs. H. P. H. JOHNSON; Mrs. J. D. MACDONALD; Mrs. C. W. MACKWORTH-PRAED; Mrs. A. L. W. MAYO; Mrs. D. A. T. MORGAN; Mrs. R. E. MOREAU; A. G. MURRELL; Miss M. NEWMAN; Mrs. E. R. PARRINDER; Mrs. C. W. G. PAULSON; Mrs. C. R. S. PITMAN; Lady E. PLEYDELL-BOUVERIE; Capt. RUSHBROOKE, R.N.; Mrs. H. M. SALMON; Miss SARGENT; Mrs. C. SETH-SMITH; Dr. J. N. D. SMITH; Mrs. A. L. THOMSON; Mrs. TICEHURST; H. B. USHER; Mrs. G. WALTER; C. S. YOUNG; C. WEBB; and two others.

Members of the Union, 44; Members of the Club, 50; Guests, 44; Total, 138.

### Waders on Hilbre Island.

Viscount Alanbrooke showed a colour film.

### Sunrise Serenades.

A sound colour film, showing a display of three species of American Grouse, was shown on behalf of Mr. Edgar Monsanto Queeny.

Both films were very much appreciated by those present.

### Notes on Eastern African Birds.

Captain C. H. B. GRANT and Mr. C. W. MACKWORTH-PRAED sent the following three notes:—

- (1) On the status of *Apalis griseiceps chyulu* (Van Someren), Journ. E.A.U. Nat. Hist. Soc. 14, p. 97, 1939: Chyulu Hills, south-eastern Kenya Colony.

Through the kindness of the Coryndon Memorial Museum, Nairobi, the British Museum has received the type and five specimens of this race. We have compared these with the series in the National Collection from Mt. Kilimanjaro, Oldeani and Mbulu of *Apalis flavigularis griseiceps* (Reichenow & Neumann), and we are quite unable to see that they differ in any way. We therefore place *Apalis griseiceps chyulu* (Van Someren), as a synonym of *Apalis flavigularis griseiceps* (Reichenow & Neumann).

- (2) On the status of *Schænicola brevirostris chyulu* (Van Someren), Journ. E.A.U. Nat. Hist. Soc. 14, p. 95, 1939: Chyulu Hills, south-eastern Kenya Colony.

Through the kindness of the Trustees of the Coryndon Memorial Museum, Nairobi, the British Museum has received the type and three specimens of this race. In 1938 we compared specimens sent to us by Dr. Van Someren and have again very carefully compared these three specimens with the long series in the British Museum and we are quite unable to see that they differ in any way.

We therefore place *Schænicola brevirostris chyulu* (Van Someren), as a synonym of *Schænicola brevirostris alexinae* (Heuglin).

- (3) On the status of *Melocichla mentalis chyulu* (Van Someren), J.E.A.U. Nat. Hist. Soc. 14, p. 91, 1939: Chyulu Range, south-eastern Kenya Colony.

Through the kindness of the Trustees of the Coryndon Memorial Museum, Nairobi, the British Museum has received the type and we have had the loan of a specimen of this race and have compared them with the series in the British Museum. We are unable to see that they differ in any way from many specimens of *Melocichla mentalis amauroura* (Pelzeln) and therefore place *Melocichla mentalis chyulu* (Van Someren), as a synonym of *Melocichla mentalis amauroura* (Pelzeln).

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If no M.S. is handed to the Editor at the Meeting, a note will be inserted mentioning the contribution.

#### SUBSCRIPTIONS.

Members who have not yet paid their subscriptions, are reminded they were due on 1st January, 1951, and the amount of One Guinea should be forwarded to the Hon. Treasurer at the address given below.

ADDRESS of the HON. SECRETARY and HON. TREASURER.

Hon. Secretary—N. J. Wadley, 14, Elm Place, London, S.W.7.  
Telephone No. MONarch 8961.

Hon. Treasurer—C. N. Walter, 290, Finsbury Pavement House,  
Moorgate, London, E.C.2.

Telephone No. MONarch 9436.

## DINNERS AND MEETINGS FOR 1951.

January 17th (500th Meeting); February 21st; March 14th (Joint Meeting with B.O.U.); April 18th (Annual General Meeting); May 16th; June 20th; October 17th; November 21st; December 19th.

## NEXT MEETING.

The next Meeting of the Club will take place on Wednesday, 18th April, 1951, at the Rembrandt Hotel, Thurloe Place, preceded by a Dinner at 6.30 P.M.



# BULLETIN

OF THE

## BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB.

Volume 71.

No. 4.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

*Chairman* : SIR PHILIP MANSON-BAHR.

This meeting was held at the Hotel Rembrandt, Thurlow Place, London, S.W.7, on Wednesday, 18th April, 1951, at 5.45 p.m.—25 members were present.

The Report of the Committee was taken as read, having been previously circulated to all members in the United Kingdom.

The Hon. Treasurer, Mr. C. N. Walter, in reply to a question from Mr. J. D. Macdonald, explained that the rise in printing costs of the "Bulletin" from 22s. 0d. a page in 1948, to 45s. 0d. in 1950 had placed the Club in a difficult position. But for economies of £75 per annum, there would have been a large deficit last year. By tax rebates of £40 on deeds of covenant and re-investment of the holding of National Savings Certificates in 3% Defence Bonds the Committee expected to meet the probable further rise in the cost of printing in 1951 and increase the size of the "Bulletin" from 63 pages to 80 pages.

The Chairman raised the question of how members thought the "Bulletin" could be improved. He suggested (a) issuing 3 "Bulletins" per annum, (b) putting them in paper covers, and (c) saving space by omitting the names of attenders at the monthly dinners. The meeting was in favour of (c) by 22 votes to 2, one abstaining; but left the Committee to investigate and decide (a) and (b), on which there were wide divergencies of opinion.

The suggestion of a member to hold the monthly meetings other than in the 3rd week of the month was unanimously negatived.

A vote of thanks was accorded to Messrs. W. B. Keen & Co., the Auditors, for their generous gesture in waiving their fees.

Colonel R. Meinertzhagen presented the Club with a gavel on completion of his fifty years of membership. The gavel is of carved walnut and bears a silver plate inscribed "British Ornithologists' Club from Colonel Richard Meinertzhagen 1901-1951," together with a Siberian Cross inlaid in silver, originally given to him by Seebohm. A vote of thanks was passed to Colonel Meinertzhagen together with the good wishes of the Club for his handsome presentation.

### ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

*Honorary Treasurer* : MR. C. N. WALTER (re-elected).

*Honorary Secretary* : MR. N. J. P. WADLEY.

*Committee* : MISS C. M. ACLAND.

### COMMITTEE, 1951.

Sir PHILIP MANSON-BAHR, *Chairman* (1950), Colonel R. MEINERTZHAGEN, *Vice-Chairman* (1950), Mr. C. N. WALTER, *Honorary Treasurer* (1950), Mr. N. J. P. WADLEY, *Honorary Secretary* (1951), Captain C. H. B. GRANT, *Editor* (1947), Lt.-Cdr. C. P. STAPLES (1948), Mr. R. P. DONALDSON (1950), Col. O. E. WYNNE (1950), Miss C. M. ACLAND (1951).

### ORDINARY MEETING.

The five hundred and third Meeting of the Club was held at the Rembrandt Hotel on Wednesday, 18th April, 1951, following a dinner at 6.30 p.m.

*Chairman* : SIR PHILIP MANSON-BAHR.

Members present, 34 ; Guests, 8 ; Total, 42.

### Syrian Ostrich Eggs.

Colonel MEINERTZHAGEN exhibited four eggs of the extinct Syrian Ostrich.

One of these was a fresh egg brought into Amman on May 3rd, 1920 and had been taken from a nest in the Wadi Sirhan.

The other three eggs were given to him recently by King Ibn Saud and had been taken in the Empty Quarter of Arabia about fifty years ago and they are believed to be the last eggs taken in that district, the Ostrich having been extinct in Southern Arabia since then.

From enquiries made recently in Arabia, it seems that the last birds of this race of Ostrich were shot in 1939 near Jauf ; the motor-car and modern rifles being mainly responsible for the tragedy.

## The Protective Adaptations of Birds' Eggs, with special reference to Relative Palatability.

Dr. HUGH B. COTT gave a Talk and showed slides :—

In Bull. B.O.C. 65, p. 31, 1946, a note was given of a talk on observations and experiments on the relative palatability of the flesh of birds, and the facts were discussed in relation to the theories of concealing and warning coloration. During the past six years, this work has been extended as a survey of the relative acceptability of birds' eggs—both to man and to various other egg-eating mammals, such as the rat, cat, ferret and hedgehog.

The assessments of palatability to man are based upon observations by members of the Cambridge Egg Panel, Low Temperature Research Station, the method being similar to that used in the routine examination and grading of fowls' eggs. Each sample (its identity withheld from members of the Panel) is tested as a scramble, prepared over steam, without addition of fat or condiment—a numerical score being awarded on a scale ranging from 10.0 (ideal) to 2.0 (inedible). This work is still in progress, but it has already yielded an extensive body of evidence, covering some 200 species of eggs.

Experiments with animals have included 765 feeding tests with 11 rats, covering 45 egg-species; 332 tests with 4 hedgehogs, covering 25 egg-species; and smaller series of tests in which the ferret and cat were used as tasters. In each test, the experimental animal is offered a choice as between two samples of different species. The resulting data, checked by repetition experiments (with the same species-pairs) and by overlapping experiments (with egg-species more or less widely separated in the hierarchy of preference) afford a means of arranging the samples in a provisional order of acceptability to the tasters.

In general, there is fair or close agreement as between these five types of taster, representing four distinct mammalian orders—Primates, Rodentia, Insectivora and Carnivora. Within the limits of the present summary it is not possible to give details, but the following general results of the inquiry may be noted. In the first place, it would appear that relative palatability in birds' eggs shows no close or obvious relation either with broad systematic affinity, feeding-habits, or palatability of the parent, or with the coloration of the yolk (which in different species may range from pale yellow to blood-red).

On the other hand, correlations are shown for various ecological factors—of a type likely to influence susceptibility to attack by predatory enemies. (a) There appears to be a broad direct relationship between acceptability of the egg and size. (b) Within the limits of the species examined, eggs of colonial nesters predominate among the more acceptable grades, as opposed to solitary nesters, which tend to be distributed more heavily among the lower grades. (c) Certain correlations again emerge

in relation to nest site, eggs laid in inaccessible sites tending to be more palatable than those of otherwise defenceless species nesting accessibly. (d) In terms of shell-coloration, high palatability is associated with cryptic appearance, while conversely, many conspicuous and distinctively marked egg-species are relatively nauseous in flavour.

When species are graded according to relative vulnerability, there is seen a striking inverse correlation between palatability and vulnerability; the most acceptable eggs tend to be those of birds protected, or relatively free from attack: on the other hand, egg species otherwise highly susceptible to attack have often become more or less unacceptable as food (marked bitterness being a common attribute). Moreover, such distastefulness tends to be associated with distinctive shell-coloration (often white with reddish markings).

It is suggested that the facts point towards an adaptive interpretation of nauseousness in eggs, considered as a deterrent to attack, and that the distinctive coloration of such distasteful but otherwise vulnerable eggs may have a warning or recognitional significance in relation to potential predators. It would thus appear that the coloration of various birds' eggs falls into line with that of birds themselves, and with many other groups of animals for which the broad principle has been established of an inverse correlation between visibility and acceptability—in accordance with the classical theories of concealing and warning coloration.

#### REFERENCES.

- COTT, HUGH B. 1945. Fair Fowl and Foul Fare. *Wine and Food*, 48: 198-204.
- COTT, HUGH B. 1945. The Edibility of Birds. *Nature*, 156: 736-7.
- COTT, HUGH B. 1946. The Edibility of Birds: Illustrated by Five Years' Experiments and Observations (1941-1946) on the Food Preferences of the Hornet, Cat and Man; and considered with special reference to the Theories of Adaptive Coloration. *Proc. Zool. Soc. London*, 371-524, 6 Pls., 38 Figs.
- COTT, HUGH B. 1948. Edibility of the Eggs of Birds. *Nature*, 161: 8-11.
- COTT, HUGH B. 1949. The Edibility of the Eggs of Birds. *Ool. Rec.*, 23: 1-9.
- COTT, HUGH B. 1951. The Palatability of the Eggs of Birds: illustrated by experiments on the food preferences of the Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*). *Proc. Zool. Soc. London*, 1-40, 1 Pl., 14 Figs.
- COTT, HUGH B. 1952 (in press). The Palatability of the Eggs of Birds: illustrated by Three Season's Experiments (1947, 1948, 1950) on the Food Preferences of the Rat (*Rattus norvegicus*); with special reference to Protective Adaptations considered in relation to Vulnerability. *Proc. Zool. Soc. London*, 4 Pls., 20 Figs.
- SWYNNERTON, C. F. M. 1916. On the Coloration of the Mouths and Eggs of Birds: II. On the Coloration of Eggs. *Ibis*, (10), 4, 529-606.

#### Notes from Nyasaland and Portuguese East Africa.

Mr. C. W. BENSON sent the following:—

*Turdus olivaceus milanjensis* Shelley. A specimen has been obtained on Dedza Mt. at 7,000 feet. The nearest previously known locality is Zomba ("Ibis", p.231, 1896). The known range is thus extended some

100 miles to the north-west. But this is of less interest than that it is the first record from west of the Shire Valley. This race is extraordinarily shy and difficult to collect. It may be expected to occur in other highland rain-forests in the Central Province of Nyasaland and adjacent Portuguese territory.

*Hyphanturgus olivaceiceps* Reichenow. A fledged juvenile taken at Kapiriuta ( $14^{\circ} 27' S.$ ,  $33^{\circ} 56' E.$ ), 12th November, still being fed by its parents, differs from the adult in having the throat and breast yellow, as on the abdomen, with a band across the breast tinged orange. The tips and margins of the outer webs of the secondaries and wing-coverts are whitish-olive. Iris grey-brown instead of red as in the adult, bill pinkish-white instead of black, culmen tinged sepia.

*Cryptospiza reichenovii australis* Shelley. A female from Dedza has the normal olive tone replaced by grey, and the crimson by orange-red, and appears to be a mere abnormality. Other specimens from practically the very same spot, and from the neighbouring locality of Chirobwe, to the southward, show the normal olive and crimson colour.

*Myopornis. böhmi* Reichenow, and *Parus rufiventris masukuensis* Shelley, do not appear to have been previously recorded from Portuguese East Africa. Specimens of each have been obtained on the boundary with Nyasaland, the former at Kapiriuta ( $14^{\circ} 27' S.$ ,  $33^{\circ} 56' E.$ ).

*Apalis murina whitei* Grant & Praed has been obtained in the Dzalanyama Mts., at  $14^{\circ} 30' S.$ ,  $33^{\circ} 40' E.$

I have to thank Mrs. T. Campbell, of the Transvaal Museum, for the loan of comparative material, and Captain C. H. B. Grant for checking my indentifications in the British Museum, to which these specimens have been presented.

## Notices.

### STOCK OF THE "BULLETIN".

It is proposed to reduce the stock of the "Bulletin", but before this is done members are given an opportunity to acquire parts at 2/6 each. Application should be made to W. E. Glegg, Esq., Zoological Museum, Tring, Herts. No reply will be sent if parts are not available.

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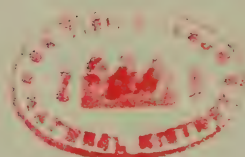
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#### NEXT MEETING.

The next Meeting of the Club will take place on Wednesday, 16th May, 1951, at the Rembrandt Hotel, Thurloe Place, preceded by a Dinner at 6.30 P.M.







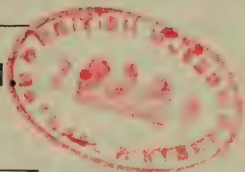
# BULLETIN

## OF THE

# BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB.

Volume 71.

No. 5.



The five-hundred and fourth meeting of the Club was held at the Rembrandt Hotel, Thurloe Place, S.W.7, on Wednesday, 16th May, 1951, following a dinner at 6.30 P.M.

*Chairman* : SIR PHILIP MANSON-BAHR.

Members present, 24 ; Guests, 6 ; Total, 30.

## A New Race of *ALECTORIS MELANOCEPHALA* Rüppell.

Colonel MEINERTZHAGEN sent the following and the type for exhibition :—

*ALECTORIS MELANOCEPHALA* GUICHARDI new race.

*Description* : Generally a pale edition of *A.m. melanocephala* from south-west Arabia. The blue on the flank feathers is especially pale, the whole mantle is paler and the brown on the neck of *A.m. melanocephala* is replaced by pale buff.

*Distribution* : Only so far known from the type locality.

*Type* : In the British Museum. Adult male. Raidat es Se'ar, El Hajar, Hadramaut. 14th September, 1950. Collected by K. M. Guichard. Collector's No. H.A.D.10. Brit. Mus. Reg. No. 1951.1.1.

*Measurements* : Measurements as in *A.m. melanocephala*.

*Remarks* : The type of *A. melanocephala* came from the hills near Jedda, and a large series of this race has been examined. Birds from the northern part of the Aden Protectorate and from Yemen agree with the nominate race. This pale race from Hadramaut is not surprising as the climate is more arid and severer desert conditions exist than in south-western Arabia. Specimens from western Hadramaut are intermediate.

## Reminiscences and photographs of fifty years ago.

Sir PHILIP MANSON-BAHR showed a number of slides, mainly of birds from Great Britain and America and gave interesting details of how they were taken. His talk and slides were very much appreciated.

## *Luscinia melanopogon*.

Mr. R. A. HINDE sent the following :—

I would ask your permission to make two points in reply to the remarks by Col. Meinertzhagen in the Bull. B.O.C., 70, p. 8, 1950, about the record of *Luscinia melanopogon* (Temminck) breeding in Cambridgeshire. First, that the identification did not depend on plumage characteristics alone, but on voice and behaviour. As well as the ordinary call notes, the song was heard once and was quite distinct from that of *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* (Linn.). The cocking of the tail, noted in the Handbook as characteristic of *L. melanopogon*, was seen frequently. Second, that nearly all the observers were able to compare the birds directly in the field with Sedge Warblers, which were breeding in the same area, and noted that both the adults and the young differed conspicuously from them.

I might add that I have a copy of the full field notes of all observers, which is available for inspection by anyone interested.

## On the Author and Reference of *Ardea lentiginosa*.

Mr. J. D. MACDONALD and Captain C. H. B. GRANT sent the following note :—

It is usual to attribute the name *Ardea lentiginosa* to Montagu who used it in his "Supplement to the Ornithological Dictionary", 1813. It is so quoted by Sherborne, "Index Animalum", p. 3482, 1927.

The attention of ornithologists has now been invited to Richard Pulteney's "Catalogue of the Birds, (etc.) of Dorsetshire", also published in 1813. Additions are by Thomas Rackett and on page 14, under his initials, appears *Ardea lentiginosa* with a valid description. Although Rackett states that "Mr. Montagu has obligingly communicated the description of this new species", and refers to the "Supplement", there is evidence that Pulteney's work was published first. On the fly leaf of the copy in the library of the Linnean Society there is an inscription in Rackett's handwriting which is dated May 24th, 1813. The Introduction to Montagu's work is dated June, 1813. Both descriptions are based on the same specimen so that it is only the author and reference which require to be altered. The full reference should be as follows :—

*Ardea lentiginosa* Rackett, in Pulteney's "Cat. of the Birds of Dorsetshire", p. 14, 1813 : Parish of Piddleton, Dorsetshire.

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## NEXT MEETING.

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## EXTRACT FROM RULE 10.

Contributors are entitled to six free separates of any one article and if they desire to exercise this privilege they should give notice to the Editor when their manuscript is handed in. Separates in excess of the six free copies can be ordered at the same time. These will be supplied by the publishers to whom payment at current rates shall be made on demand.

Please note the words, "desire to exercise this privilege."

# BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st December, 1950.

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## REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE.

The Committee present the Accounts of the Club for the year 1950 in a new form which it is hoped will make the financial position clear to members. The figures for the previous eighteen months are not shown as they are not strictly comparable.

Instead of a Receipts and Payments Account, as hitherto, an Income and Expenditure Account is submitted in two parts; the first part showing the ordinary Income and Expenditure relating to the year, whether or not such had been actually received or paid by the 31st December, 1950. This account shows whether the Club is paying its way on its real income. The second part of the Account contains income which does not relate to the year 1950. In addition there is a Balance Sheet giving the assets and liabilities of the Club at 31st December 1950.

The accounts show that in ordinary income there was a deficit, expenditure exceeding income by £7 3s. 10d. This amount is carried to the second part of the account where it is set-off against sales of Bulletins of previous years, the surplus of which, viz. £73 6s. 10d., is carried to the Accumulated Fund in the Balance Sheet.

If the Committee had not effected certain drastic economies during the year the excess of expenditure would have been considerably greater. Also the Club has benefited by expenses which certain members have not claimed, and the Auditors have made a contribution by agreeing to continue in an honorary capacity, a gesture which is greatly appreciated.

It is desirable to segregate the sales of old "Bulletins" in the Accounts because they do not relate to the year, also it is anticipated that the proceeds from this source are not likely to continue on the same scale as in 1949 and 1950. Their inclusion with the ordinary income obscures the real position.

The net liabilities outstanding at the commencement of the year, and relating to the year 1949, amounted to £131 19s. 4d., and this sum has been charged to the Accumulated Fund as shown in the Balance Sheet.

The stock of the "Bulletin" being of doubtful value is included in the Balance Sheet at a nominal value of £1 for the sake of record.

Forty-eight members have covenanted their subscriptions, commencing with the year 1951. The response was not so great as the Committee hoped for. It will, however, materially help future income which will be faced with rising costs for printing. Members who have not yet done so, and can see their way to complete a Deed of Covenant can make a valuable contribution at no additional cost to themselves.

During the year nine meetings have been held and the aggregate attendances were 295 members and 83 guests, a total of 378, or an average of 42 per meeting. This figure compares with 32 in 1948-49, 38 in 1947-48 and 44 in the record year of 1945-46.

The membership suffered in 1950 from an unusual number of resignations, 9 members leaving the Club. The Committee regret to note the deaths of Mr. Henry B. Conover, Lt.-Col. R. F. Meiklejohn and Mr. B. W. Tucker reported since the last Annual General Meeting. New members joining in 1950 were nine and in addition five Associate members were elected. The total membership at the end of the year was thus 174, an increase of two compared with the figure of 172 published in the December 1949 list of members.

Thanks to Mr. W. E. Glegg the sale of back numbers of the "Bulletin" has continued to make a useful contribution to our funds and the Committee is most grateful to him for carrying on with this work.

At the Special General Meeting held in November, 1950, the alteration in the Rules was effected, enabling the Club to obtain the tax benefits explained above. Having taken steps to place the finances of the Club on a sounder basis the Committee is actively considering how the benefits of membership can be enhanced and how the "Bulletin" can be made of interest to a wider field of scientific ornithologists. In this respect any suggestions from members would be welcomed and will be given careful consideration.

(Signed) P. MANSON-BAHR,

*Chairman.*

27th March, 1951.

## BRITISH ORNITHOLOGY

## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR 1951

## EXPENDITURE.

£ s. d.

£ s. d.

'Bulletin' Vol. 70 :—

Cost of publication, distribution, including

Editor's Expenses ... .. 192 15 2

Less : Sales ... .. 37 11 8

155 3 6

Notices for Meetings ... .. 22 6 2

Hire of Lantern ... .. 10 12 0

Contribution towards cost of "Zoological Record" ... 10 10 0

Miscellaneous Expenditure, including Postages, Printing

and Stationery ... .. 19 6 10

£217 18 6

£ s. d.

Excess of Expenditure over Income brought down ... 7 3 10

Surplus for the year carried to Accumulated Fund ... 73 6 10

£80 10 8

## BALANCE SHEET, 31st December 1950

£ s. d.

£ s. d.

## ACCUMULATED FUND :—

Investments and Cash per Financial

Statement 31st December, 1949 ... 978 17 11

Stock of "Bulletin", say ... .. 1 0 0

979 17 11

Less : Net Liabilities at 31st December,

1949, re "Bulletin" etc., and

subscriptions in advance ... .. 131 19 4

As at 31st December, 1949 ... .. 847 18 7

Add : Surplus for year 1950 ... .. 73 6 10

921 5 5

SUBSCRIPTIONS, for 1951, paid in advance ... .. 8 5 0

CREDITORS, for cost of "Bulletin" ... .. 126 7 7

£1,055 18 0

We have examined the above Balance Sheet and Income Statement and find them to be in accordance therewith, and in our opinion correct.

FINSBURY CIRCUS HOUSE,

BLOMFIELD STREET,

LONDON, E.C.2.

22nd March, 1951.

## ISTS' CLUB

YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1950.

## INCOME

INCOME					£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Subscriptions :—										
171 Members	...	...	...	...	179	11	0			
Less : In arrear	...	...	...	...	1	1	0			
					<hr/>					
					178	10	0			
5 Associates	...	...	...	...	5	5	0			
					<hr/>			183	15	0
Entrance Fees :—										
10 Members	...	...	...	...	10	0	0			
5 Associates	...	...	...	...	5	0	0			
					<hr/>			15	0	0
Investment Income	...	...	...	...	...	...		11	19	8
								<hr/>		
								210	14	8
Balance, Excess of Expenditure over Income carried down...								7	3	10
								<hr/>		
								£217	18	6
								<hr/>		
								£	s.	d.
Sales of “ Bulletin ” for previous years, <i>less</i> expenses	...							80	10	8
								<hr/>		
								£80	10	8

EMBER, 1950.

					£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
INVESTMENTS, at cost :—										
£256 14s. 1d. 3½% War Stock	...	...	...	...	255	13	4			
£100 3% Savings Bonds 1960/70	...	...	...	...	100	0	0			
500 National Savings Certificates	...	...	...	...	400	0	0			
(Market value of all securities at this date, £981)					<hr/>			755	13	4
STOCK OF " BULLETIN " Nominal value	...	...	...	...	...	...		1	0	0
DEBTORS, for sales of " Bulletin "	...	...	...	...	...	...		22	19	0
CASH, at Bank	...	...	...	...	...	...		276	5	8

PHILIP MANSON-BAHR, *Chairman.*C. N. WALTER, *Hon. Treasurer.*

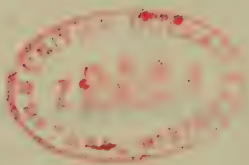

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 £1,055 18 0
 

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Audit Account with the books and records of the Club and certify

W. B. KEEN & CO.,  
*Chartered Accountants,  
 Honorary Auditors*



**BULLETIN**

OF THE

**BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB.**

---

**Volume 71.****No. 6.**

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The five-hundred and fifth meeting of the Club was held at the Rembrandt Hotel, Thurloe Place, S.W.7, on Wednesday, 20th June, 1951, following a dinner at 6.30 P.M.

*Chairman:* SIR PHILIP MANSON-BAHR.

Members present, 33; Guests, 8.

*Guests of the Club:*—Mr. S. MAVROGORDATO, Dr. and Mrs. T. H. WORK.

Total, 44.

**The Falcons and Hawks of the Northern Sudan.**

Mr. S. MAVROGORDATO gave a most interesting talk and exhibited a trained Barbary Falcon.

**A new race of *Artomyias fuliginosa* from Southern Nigeria.**

Mr. CHARLES VAURIE sent the following:—

During the examination of some African flycatchers I had the occasion to compare the various populations of *Artomyias fuliginosa* Varreaux, in the collection of the American Museum of Natural History. This collection includes specimens from all the known parts of the range. The population from southern Nigeria is, I find, very distinct from all the others and I propose to separate it under the name of:

*ARTOMYIAS FULIGINOSA CHAPINI*, new race.

*Description:* Differs from all other known populations of the species by having the ground colour of the throat, lower breast, belly, and under tail-coverts distinctly whiter; the under wing-coverts and axillaries also appear to average paler.

*Distribution:* Known so far only from three adult specimens collected at Oguta, southern Nigeria, from 21st September to 17th November, 1901, by Dr. W. J. Ansorge.

*Type:* Adult male, Oguta, 12th October, 1901; American Museum of Natural History, Rothschild Collection, No. 649761.

*Measurements of Type:* Wing, 77.5; tail, 44; bill from skull, 11.5; tarsus, 11 mm.

*Remarks:* This new race is named in honour of Dr. J. P. Chapin who had long ago noted the characters of the new race but due to the pressure of other work had never found the time to describe it. In the other two specimens the wing measures 79 mm. in a male, and 79 mm. in an unsexed specimen.

### Notes on Eastern African Birds.

Captain C. H. B. GRANT and Mr. C. W. MACKWORTH-PRAED sent the following three notes:—

- (1) On the status of *Cyanomitra olivacea chyulu* Van Someren, Journ.E.A.U.Nat.Hist.Soc. 14, p. 120, 1939: Chyulu Mts., south-eastern Kenya Colony.

Through the kindness of the Trustees of the Coryndon Memorial Museum, Nairobi, the British Museum has received the type and three specimens of this race.

We have compared these with the series in the British Museum and particularly with three specimens of *Cyanomitra olivacea neglecta* Neumann, kindly loaned to us by Dr. Van Someren.

We are quite unable to see any difference between these six specimens and therefore place *Cyanomitra olivacea chyulu* Van Someren as a synonym of *Cyanomitra olivacea neglecta* Neumann.

- (2) On the status of *Cryptospiza salvadorii chyuluensis* Van Someren, Journ.E.A.U.Nat.Hist.Soc. 14, p. 125, 1939: Camp 3, Chyulu Hills, south-eastern Kenya Colony.

Through the kindness of the Trustees of the Coryndon Memorial Museum, Nairobi, the British Museum has received the type and three specimens of this race, an adult male and female and a young male and female.

We have compared these with a good series of *Cryptospiza salvadorii kilimensis* Sclater, in the National collection and are quite unable to see that they differ in any way. This is not unexpected as the range of *C. s. kilimensis* is from southern Sudan, eastern Uganda, western and central Kenya Colony to north-eastern Tanganyika Territory.

We therefore place *Cryptospiza salvadorii chyuluensis* Van Someren, as a synonym of *Cryptospiza salvadorii kilimensis* Sclater.

- (3) On the status of *Spinus citrinelloides chyulu* Van Someren, Journ.E.A.U.Nat.Hist.Soc. 14, p. 127, 1939: Chyulu Range, south-eastern Kenya Colony.

Through the kindness of the Trustees of the Coryndon Memorial Museum, Nairobi, the British Museum has received the type and three specimens of this race.

We have compared these to the large series in the National Collection and are quite unable to see that they differ in any way from *Spinus citrinelloides hypostictus*.

We therefore place *Spinus citrinelloides chyulu* Van Someren, as a synonym of *Spinus citrinelloides hypostictus* Reichenow.

## Notices.

### STOCK OF THE "BULLETIN".

It is proposed to reduce the stock of the "Bulletin", but before this is done members are given an opportunity to acquire parts at 2/6 each. Application should be made to W. E. Glegg, Esq., Zoological Museum, Tring, Herts. No reply will be sent if parts are not available.

### PUBLICATION OF THE "BULLETIN".

Members who make a contribution at a Meeting should hand the M.S. to the Editor at that Meeting. As the proofs will be corrected by the Editor, it is essential that the M.S. should be correct and either typed or written very clearly with scientific and place names in block letters. The first mention of a scientific name should be spelt out in full, i.e., genus, specific name, racial name (if any), and author. Any further mention of the same name need only have the initial letter of the genus and no further mention of the author.

If no M.S. is handed to the Editor at the Meeting, a note will be inserted mentioning the contribution.

### DINNERS AND MEETINGS FOR 1951.

January 17th (500th Meeting); February 21st; March 14th (Joint Meeting with B.O.U.); April 18th (Annual General Meeting); May 16th; June 20th; October 17th; November 21st; December 19th.

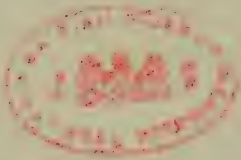
### NEXT MEETING.

The next Meeting of the Club will take place on Wednesday, 17th October, 1951, at the Rembrandt Hotel, Thurloe Place, preceded by a Dinner at 6.30 P.M.

### EXTRACT FROM RULE 10.

Contributors are entitled to six free separates of any one article and if they desire to exercise this privilege they should give notice to the Editor when their manuscript is handed in. Separates in excess of the six free copies can be ordered at the same time. These will be supplied by the publishers to whom payment at current rates shall be made on demand.

Please note the words, "desire to exercise this privilege."



**BULLETIN**

OF THE

**BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB.**

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**Volume 71.****No. 7.**

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The five-hundred and sixth meeting of the Club was held at the Rembrandt Hotel, Thurloe Place, S.W.7, on Wednesday, 17th October, 1951, following a dinner at 6.30 P.M.

*Chairman*: SIR PHILIP MANSON-BAHR.

Members present, 39 ; Guests, 13 ; Guests of the Club, DR. and MRS. W. H. BIERMAN, total, 54.

**The Birds of the Antarctic.**

Dr. W. H. BIERMAN gave a very interesting talk and showed some excellent films of the Birds and Whales, which were much appreciated.

**A new species of Shrike and a new race of *Apalis* from West Africa.**

Dr. WILLIAM SERLE exhibited and described the following :—

*CHLOROPHONEUS KUPEENSIS*, new species.

*Description*.—Narrow frontal band, lores, sides of face, ear coverts, and sides of neck black ; crown, nape, neck and mantle grey ; separating the grey of the forecrown from the black frontal band a narrow whitish band continuous with a thin whitish stripe over and behind the eye ; back, rump, upper tail coverts, tail, wing coverts, outer webs of the primaries and secondaries, and both webs of the innermost secondaries bright olive green ; inner web of primaries and of all but innermost secondaries blackish ; chin and throat white ; breast, abdomen, and sides of body grey, shading into olive green on the flanks and thighs, and into light greenish yellow on the lower abdomen and under tail coverts ; in the midline a patch of metallic purplish black 15mm. broad by 5mm. deep separates the throat from the breast ; axillaries, under wing-coverts, and edge of the wing behind the carpal joint yellow ; under surface of the wing pale green on the outer web ; dark grey margined with pale yellow on the inner web.

*Distribution*.—Known only from the primary forest of Kupé Mountain, British Cameroons, at an altitude of 4,500 feet.

*Type*.—In the British Museum. Adult female. Kupé Mountain, Lat. 4° 45' N, Long. 9° 40' E., Kumba Division, British Cameroons. 2 November 1949. Collected by Gilbert Nkwocha for Dr. William Serle. Collector's No. C3560. Brit. Mus. Reg. No. 1951, 34, 1.

*Measurements of type*.—Wing 99, culmen from feathers 23, tail 81, tarsus 29mm.

*Soft parts*.—Iris violet; feet grey; bill black.

*Remarks*.—This new species appears to belong to the genus *Chlorophoneus*. The bill is relatively stouter than in other *Chlorophoneus* species, and in respect of this important character the new form is intermediate between *Chlorophoneus* and *Malaconotus*, but nearer to *Chlorophoneus*.

The adult male resembles the adult female in plumage. This sexual similarity in plumage relates *Chlorophoneus kupeensis* to *Malaconotus* species and distinguishes it from other *Chlorophoneus* species.

An immature female, with skull partially ossified, resembles the adult, but the grey of the upper parts is flecked with olive green, the chin and throat flecked with pale yellow, and the grey of the underparts flecked with greenish yellow. In place of the metallic throat patch is a narrow indistinct necklace of yellowish brown.

*Measurements*.—Adult male, wing 97; culmen 24; tail 80; tarsus 28mm. One adult female has wing 98; culmen 22; tail 79; tarsus 29 mm. Immature female wing 98; culmen 22; tail 80; tarsus 28 mm.

*Habits*.—The type specimen was one of two similar birds high up in the foliage, on the steep forested slopes of Kupé Mountain. It had been feeding on insects.

My African skinner and I searched the Kupé forests on several occasions during the next eighteen months, and on 12 June 1951 the Shrike was again encountered.

On this occasion a party of three, adult male and adult female both in moult, and immature female, were discovered moving about the branches of the smaller trees, 20 to 30 feet from the ground, in the shade of the mid-stratum of the forest. They did not associate with any other species. The call was a distinctive trisyllabic whistle, the three notes in different pitch. The stomachs of all three birds contained insects.

#### APALIS RUFOGULARIS SANDERI, new race.

*Description*.—Similar to *Apalis rufogularis rufogularis* (Fraser), but chin, throat, and upper breast black instead of brownish slate, tinged olive; the buff wash on the lower breast and the belly greatly reduced and just perceptible; head and nape blackish brown shading into black on the forehead, lores, sides of the face, and ear coverts, instead of slate; mantle, back and wing—coverts a shade darker.

*Distribution*.—Lagos, south-western Nigeria.

*Type*.—In the British Museum. Adult male. River Ogun, near Lagos. 3 February 1951. Collected by Mr. Frederick Sander. Brit. Mus. Reg. No. 1951. 10. 1.

*Measurements of type.*—Wing 44, tail 43, culmen 11, tarsus 17 mm.

*Soft parts.*—Iris light reddish brown ; bill black ; feet dark flesh.

*Remarks.*—This very distinct new race extends the range of *Apalis rufogularis* nearly three hundred miles westwards. Specimens in the British Museum from Owerri, eastern Nigeria are typical *Apalis rufogularis*.

It was one of a bird party moving through the shrubbery on the edge of a forest clearing. There were beetles in its stomach.

This new race is named after Mr. F. Sander, Nigerian Railway, who collected it, and noticed that it differed from the description of the nominate race.

### A Series of Abnormal Eggs.

Dr. J. M. HARRISON made the following remarks and exhibited specimens :—

An early treatise upon the formation of the egg and the chick was published by the anatomist Heironumus Fabricius, in Padua, in 1621.

This work entitled *De Formatione Ovi et Pulli*, and a second by the same author, the *De Formatione Fœtu*, have been translated by Howard B. Adelmann, (1) Professor of Histology and Embryology in the Cornell University. They have also been the subject of a communication by Professor H. A. Harris (2) of the Anatomy School, Cambridge University.

Fabricius may claim to be the first to have given a life history of the egg since the time of the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle (384-332 B.C.)

He recognised and described the various component structures of the egg, described also the rotation it undergoes on its passage down the oviduct, and asks the pertinent question, "Why does the egg emerge blunt end first?"

Recent research in the Zoological Department of Cambridge University by Mr. J. R. G. Bradfield and from X-ray studies by Mr. J. A. Fozzard, has greatly advanced our knowledge of the actual egg-laying process.

It is well known that in the domestic hen about 26 hours elapses between the laying of successive eggs. I do not propose to go into the details of this, but it is known that at 23½ hours the small end of the egg is still piloting, but that during the 24th and 25th hours, a rotation around the short axis of the egg takes place, and the blunt end then presents.

It is suggested that this rotation occurs because the hemispherical shape of the blunt end conforms more snugly to the dilated end, or uterus, of the oviduct, while it has been calculated that such a shape is capable of resisting far greater pressures, and it is believed that the egg shell has a breaking stress of 9.8 lbs. to the square inch.

- (1). Adelmann, H. B. (1942). The Embryological Treatises of Hieronymus Fabricius of Aquapendente. Cornell University Press.
- (2). Harris, H. A. (1948). De Formatione Ovi et Pulli. Brit. Med. Jnl. 27, 3, p. 585.

It can readily be understood from this brief account that with diseases and disorders of the ovary, oviduct, and particularly of the uterus and cloaca, abnormalities of the egg may well result.

There is of course an extensive literature on this subject, and I have thought that you would be interested to see some examples of egg abnormalities.

These may be broadly classified as :—

1. Abnormalities of size, e.g. abnormally large ; such eggs are usually double-yolked, or even very rarely treble-yolked, this anomaly is said to occur approximately once in every 23,000,000 layings. Dwarf eggs can be produced by birds of any age, and are the result of egg formation around a foreign body of some kind, such as a small blood clot, or a piece of inspissated albumen. Such eggs are of course infertile, and may be of unconventional shape, e.g., spherical or elliptical.

2. Anomalies of shape, the three examples shown demonstrate the extreme types. One is a fairly large and almost spherical egg, the other two show an elongation of the smaller end, as though at the final extrusion the egg had received an undue squeeze. One of these is that of a domestic hen, the other that of a Lapwing, *Vanellus vanellus* (Linnæus).

3. Anomalies due to faulty mechanism. The double egg or Ovum in Ovo of which an example produced by a domestic hen is shown, depends upon two main factors. Firstly the production of a dwarf egg around some foreign body, and secondly a reversal of the peristaltic wave, forcing the egg back into the ovarian pocket to meet a second egg on its way down the oviduct, thus becoming included in this second egg. The reversal of the wave is usually brought about by some pathological state affecting the lower end of the oviduct, i.e., the uterus or possibly also the cloaca.

The last abnormality I will refer to is a very curious one, for as will be seen from the two examples shown, the egg, although of about normal size, is a symmetrical in that one aspect of it is flattened. It will also be seen that it bears a curious circular radiate impression, which it seems must be the impression of the cloacal exit. One is led to the conclusion that such cases represent a mal-presentation of the egg, in which the rotation around the short axis has been incomplete, and one may with some justification draw an analogy between this and the dreaded transverse lie in human obstetrics.

I believe this to be a rather rare oological anomaly, for in a long experience I have only seen two such eggs. It is certainly a fault in the normal mechanism of egg deposition which must cause the hen very considerable embarrassment, and no doubt rotation forwards to bring the blunt end as the presenting end must occur before the egg is laid.

Some information on egg abnormalities in wild species has recently been sent me by Dr. Wolfgang Makatsch, the German oologist. In a letter (13. September, 1951) he informs me that his wife recently found a clutch of four eggs of the Red-backed Shrike, one of the clutch being a dwarf egg. He further informs me that dwarf eggs are not uncommon

in the Eider Duck, *Somateria mollissima* Linnæus, at the commencement of the breeding season, when as many as two or three dwarf eggs may be found in one nest.

A Mallard, *Anas platyrhynchos* Linnæus, which had laid 82 normal eggs during the years 1928 to 1932, in 1933 produced as many as 14 dwarf eggs. He informs me that the Germans recognise two types of diminutive eggs—the Zwergeier, which are small but contain a yolk, and the Spareier (also referred to as Spureier) which show only a trace of yolk, or no yolk at all.

## On the Type Locality of *Struthio camelus* Linnaeus, and Description of a New Race.

Captain C. H. B. GRANT and Mr. C. W. MACKWORTH-PRAED sent the following :—

Linnæus, Syst. Nat. 10th ed. p. 155, 1758, gives localities as Syria, Arabia, Lybia, Africa, and references to Aldrovandus, Orn. 1, 9. c-2 ; Dodart, Mem. 335 ; Seb. Mus. I, t. 51, p. 6 ; Will. Orn. 104, t. 25 ; Raj Av. 36 ; and Alb. Av. 3, p. 30, t. 31.

Aldrovandus, Orn. Lib. 9, Cap 2, p. 587, 1599, on page 592, gives on the authority of older authors, Syria, Sind, Arabia, Libya and Arguin Island, Mauretania. Dodart, Ac. Sci. Paris, Mem. pour servir l'Hist. Nat. Anim. pl. & text, p. 335, 1736, gives no locality. Seba, Loc. rer. nat. thes. acc. descri. I, pl. 51, t. 6, Amsterdam 1734-65, gives Cape of Good Hope. Willughby & Ray in Willughby, p. 104, pl. 25, 1675, gives Africa and Arabia. Albin, 3, p. 30, pl. 31, 1740, gives Deserts of Arabia and Africa.

In Bull. B.O.C. 39, p. 83, 1919, Rothschild describes *Struthio camelus syriacus*, giving North Africa as the type locality for *Struthio camelus* Linnæus, despite his statements that the neck and legs are light red and that "the Syrian Ostrich should be the typical *Struthio camelus* of Linnæus." He further states that Aldrovandus, Dodart, Seba, Willughby and Ray "can only have seen specimens from North Africa."

Rothschild would have been well advised to have adhered to his first statement that the type locality of *S. camelus* is Syria and given a name to the North African bird. His second statement does not agree with the facts, as shown by the references quoted above. In the O.M. p. 139, 1926, Stresemann, in giving the type locality as Sennar, appears to have overlooked the fact that Syria is given first by Linnæus and, in any case, Libya would have precedence over Sennar.

We therefore find that the correct type locality for *Struthio camelus camelus* Linnæus, is Syria, and that *Struthio camelus syriacus* Rothschild, Bull. B.O.C. 39, p. 83, 1919 : Syrian Desert, becomes a synonym. The North African bird has no name and we propose :—

*STRUTHIO CAMELUS ROTHSCILDI*, new race.

*Description*.—Similar to *S. c. camelus* Linnæus but larger.

*Distribution*.—North Africa, south of the Atlas Mts. to upper Senegal River, Upper Niger River, the Sudan and Abyssinia.

*Type*.—In the British Museum. Male, adult. Marandet, south Air or Azibine, Niger district, French West Africa. 16 August, 1922. Collected by Captain A. Buchanan. Collector's No. 305. Brit. Mus. Reg. No. 1923.11.26.1.

*Measurements of type*.—Bill from gape 135, tarsus 520 mm.

*Remarks*.—We have to thank Colonel R. Meinertzhagen for inviting our attention to this matter.

### On *Struthio camelus syriacus* Rothschild.

Colonel R. MEINERTZHAGEN sent the following :—

Grant and Praed have kindly shown me the above note, on which I should like to comment as follows :—

If an author gives several localities when naming a species, a subsequent author is not obliged to select any particular locality for the nominate race ; the usual practise is to select the first locality named but it is not obligatory. In any case the selection of type localities by subsequent authors is not binding on anyone.

Rothschild was within his rights to select North Africa as the type locality of *Struthio c. camelus* Linnæus, though his procedure may have been unwise.

Rothschild's *S. c. syriacus* has been in use for thirty-two years and it is the duty of systematists to retain names which have been in use for a generation or more, if it can possibly be done. To insist that Syria must be the type locality of *S. c. camelus* with *S. c. syriacus* as a synonym and to give a new name to the North African bird can only lead to confusion.

The correct procedure in this case is to make a neo-type of *S. c. camelus* from North Africa. By doing so the position is clarified and not confused.

### On the Status of *Eremopterix signata cavei* Grant and Praed.

Captain C. H. B. GRANT and Mr. C. W. MACKWORTH-PRAED sent the following :—

In Bull. B.O.C. 61, p. 62, 1941, we placed this race under *Eremopterix leucopareia* (Fischer and Reichenow).

In Bull. B.O.C. 69, p. 108, 1949, Cave correctly states that this is a race of *Eremopterix signata* (Oustalet) and not of *E. leucopareia*.

Mr. J. L. Peters in a letter dated 21 June 1951, points out to us that *E. s. cavei* should be a synonym of *Eremopterix signata harrisoni* O. Grant, Bull. B.O.C., 11, p. 30, 1900 : South end of Lake Rudolf.

We have examined the type of *E. s. harrisoni* and compared it with a series of both *E. s. signata* and *E. s. cavei* and find that it agrees with the latter. Therefore *Eremopterix signata cavei* Grant and Praed, becomes a synonym of *Eremopterix signata harrisoni* O. Grant.

## On the Type of *Tchitreia perspicillata suahelica* (Reichenow) and the Status of *Tchitreia perspicillata ungujaensis* Grant and Praed.

Captain C. H. B. GRANT and Mr. C. W. MACKWORTH-PRAED sent the following :—

In the Bull. B.O.C. 67, p. 43, 1947, we accepted a specimen kindly loaned to us by Dr. Stresemann, as the type of *T. p. suahelica*. We stated then that this specimen agreed with specimens of *T. viridus ferreti* Guérin, and that it did not fit the description of *T. p. suahelica*.

We now learn that this type was selected from specimens in the same collection and was not in actual fact designated as the type by Guérin. As this specimen does not agree with the description it cannot be accepted as the type, the specimen described by Guérin presumably being no longer in existence. We therefore now recognise *Tchitreia ruwenzoriæ suahelica* Reichenow, Werther Mittl. Hochl. D. Ostaf. p. 275, 1898 : Mpondi River, Usandawe, Tanganyika Territory, as the valid name for this race and place *Tchitreia perspicillata ungujaensis* Grant, and Praed, Bull. B.O.C. 67, p. 42, 1947 : Zanzibar Island, as a synonym of it.

This is an example of the danger of electotypes, especially if they do not come from the exact type locality.

## What is *Sylvia ticehursti* Meinertzhagen.

Dr. ERNEST MAYR and Colonel R. MEINERTZHAGEN sent the following :—

Only the type of this species described a dozen years ago, Bull. B.O.C., p. 59, p. 69, 1939 from southern Morocco is known. In spite of its pale sandy coloration it has nothing to do with *Sylvia nana deserti* (Loche), which has a much shorter tail, 47-51 mm., uniform tertials, and white on the second outermost tail feather. Of the known species of *Sylvia* it is closest to *S. conspicillata* Temminck, and *S. deserticola* Tristram, in general proportions, although conspicuously differing in coloration. The tail of *S. ticehursti* is very long, central tail feather 59 mm., while in *S. deserticola* it is about 55-58 mm. and in *S. conspicillata* 51-56 mm.; outermost tail feather 52 mm. Wing short, 54.5 mm., which agrees better with *S. deserticola* than with *S. conspicillata*. Second primary rather short, no longer than seventh, which again agrees with *S. deserticola*, while in *S. conspicillata* the second primary is about like the fifth or sixth. Extent of white on outermost tail feather about as in *S. deserticola*.

The paleness of the bird would favor closer relationship to *S. conspicillata* than to the dark *S. deserticola*; size and proportions are nearer to those of *S. deserticola*. The locality is at the very edge of the range of the two species, and it is possible that we are dealing with a peripheral population of either of the two. Lynes, who collected in a nearby area of southern Morocco, failed to find any birds resembling *S. ticehursti*. Meinertzhagen obtained *S. conspicillata* within five miles of the type locality of *S. ticehursti* but in country containing more bush and not quite so arid as the country in which *S. ticehursti* was found. However, this

was at the end of November at which time both *S. conspicillata* and *S. deserticola* would be in their winter quarters. It is thus quite possible that *S. ticehursti* is a south-west Moroccan desert race of either *S. conspicillata* or *S. deserticola*. The status of *S. ticehursti* remains open to question until further collecting and field studies have been done in southwestern Morocco.

### Notes on *Anthreptes reichenowi yokanae*.

Mr. J. G. WILLIAMS sent the following:—

In Bull. B.O.C. 64, pp. 11, 12, 1943, Messrs. Grant and Mackworth-Praed discuss the relationship between *Anthreptes reichenowi* Gunning and *Anthreptes yokanae* Hartert. Specimens available for this comparison were one adult male *A. reichenowi* and one adult male and female of *A. yokanae*. On this material it was shown that *A. reichenowi* and *A. yokanae* are certainly conspecific, but doubts were cast as to whether *A. yokanae* is a distinguishable race.

During a recent collecting trip to the Kenya Colony coastal forests I made a point of securing a series of *A. r. yokanae*, which I found to be a local species, but not uncommon where it occurred. Through the kindness of Mr. P. A. Clancey, Curator of the Natal Museum, I have received on loan an adult male paratype of *A. r. reichenowi*, and Capt. C. H. B. Grant has kindly supplied me with details of the adult male *A. r. reichenowi* in the British Museum (Natural History). With this material and data it is possible to review the status of *A. r. yokanae* anew.

*Comparison of adult males of A. r. reichenowi and A. r. yokanae.*

#### MEASUREMENTS :

	<i>A. r. reichenowi.</i>	<i>A. r. yokanae.</i>
Wing	56-57 mm.	51-56 mm.
Exposed culmen	16-16.5 mm.	14-15.5 mm.
Tail ...	40-41 mm.	37-42 mm.
Tarsus ...	15-17 mm.	15-18 mm.
	(Two adult males).	(Nine adult males).

#### PLUMAGE CHARACTERS :

Centre of breast and abdomen chrome yellow.	Centre of breast and abdomen pale greenish-yellow.
Pectoral tufts deep lemon-yellow.	Pectoral tufts lemon-yellow.
Chin, throat and upper breast dark metallic purplish-blue.	Chin and upper throat black with narrow dark bluish fringes, merging into broad purplish-blue fringes on lower throat and upper breast.

*Anthreptes reichenowi* is therefore separable into two races on the characters of the adult male alone, *A. r. reichenowi* Gunning, Beira District, Portuguese East Africa, a slightly longer and heavier billed race with brighter underparts, and *A. r. yokanae* Hartert, Kenya Colony coastal forests and north-eastern Tanganyika Territory with a shorter, more slender bill, and duller, more greenish-yellow underparts.

Although no adult female of *A. r. reichenowi* has been available for comparison, it seems worth recording the measurements of seven adult female *A. r. yokanae*; Wing 50-52 mm., exposed culmen 13.5-15 mm., tail 33-37 mm., tarsus 14.5-17 mm.

#### *Plumages of A. r. yokanae.*

The immature plumages do not appear to have been described; material collected recently allows this to be done.

*Juvenile Male and Female.*—Similar in plumage to the adult female, but generally duller, less yellow, throughout.

*Immature Male.*—Moults direct from juvenile dress into a plumage closely resembling that of the adult male, but with the dark metallic crown and throat patches duller and smaller. This plumage is acquired by a complete moult, including the wings and tail.

*Immature Female.*—Moult as in male, and when complete indistinguishable from the adult female.

The adult male has no non-breeding dress, moulting completely from breeding dress to breeding dress.

#### *Habits of A. r. yokanae.*

Although widely distributed in the Kenya Colony coastal forests, this is one of the more elusive sunbirds and unless one is expressly searching for it, it is easily overlooked. Although keeping mainly to the tree-tops it does at times descend to forest undergrowth in its search for food. It is almost always found in pairs, the only solitary examples collected being immature birds. It is usual to encounter this sunbird, generally a single pair, in a small mixed bird party including such species as *Apalis melanocephala* (Fischer and Reichenow) *Chloropetella holochlorus* (Erlanger) and other flycatchers. Its call-note is a soft three-noted "tee teep tee." In addition the male has a brief warbling song. Flowers are very seldom visited by the bird whilst feeding, and I have only once observed a male feeding among *Loranthus* blossoms, a plant much favoured by other sunbirds. Most of its food is secured among foliage in the manner of an *Apalis* warbler. Stomach contents of specimens collected reveal that spiders form the bulk of its diet, ca. 80%, with some termites and other insects and insect larvæ.

The mating display of the male commences with a pursuit flight. After the chase has continued for several minutes the female alights on some bare hanging vine or upright, leafless sapling, whereupon the male settles immediately above her, and starts to flick his wings, and at the same time fan the pectoral tufts and utter brief snatches of song. In response the female sometimes quivers her wings, but usually flies off after a few moments, when the pursuit flight is continued.

From the evidence of collected specimens (gonad development and immature specimens) *A. r. yokanae* has two well-defined breeding seasons. The first of these is during April and May, and the second from October to December.

### New or unusual records from Northern Rhodesia.

Mr. C. M. N. WHITE sent the following :—

(1) The following recent records by Mr. E. L. Button at Lundazi are noteworthy.

*Pernis apivorus apivorus* (Linnæus).—A female on 8 October ; there are very few records from Northern Rhodesia.

*Francolinus levaillantii crawshayi* O. Grant.—Upper Chiri river, Nyika plateau, Lundazi ; new to Northern Rhodesia ; *F. l. clayi* White, is less reddish below, blacker above, wing coverts with more pronounced buffish barring, and more spotted with black below.

*Pachyoccyx audeberti validus* (Reichenow).—A female, new species to Northern Rhodesia.

*Mirafra africana nyikae* Benson.—Upper Chiri river, Nyika plateau, Lundazi ; new to Northern Rhodesia.

*Chlorocichla flavicollis flavigula* (Cabanis).—Lundazi ; an extension of range south east.

*Phyllastrephus fischeri cabanisi* Sharpe.—Lundazi ; an extension of range south east.

*Phyllastrephus flavostriatus alfredi* Shelley.—Mukutu mountains, Lundazi.

*Laniarius fülleborni* Reichenow.—Lundazi edge of Vipya plateau ; new to Northern Rhodesia.

*Quelea cardinalis rhodesiae* Grant and M. Praed.—Lundazi.

(2) At Kalomo in the southern province of Northern Rhodesia Mr. Button obtained together on the same day *Treron delalandii* (Bonaparte) and *T. australis salvadorii* (Dubois), thus providing a further locality where these species overlap in range. Both approaching breeding condition in females in August.

(3) At the Chitunta plain between Mwinilunga boma and the border of the Belgian Congo on 21 June I obtained *Cisticola dambo dambo* Lynes ; subsequently in August a collector working for Mr. I. R. Grimwood of the Game and Tsetse Department obtained further specimens at the same locality. The species is new to Northern Rhodesia. *C. ayresii ayresii* Hartlaub, was abundant in the same place though keeping to dryer parts of the plain on the whole.

## Notices.

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### DINNERS AND MEETINGS FOR 1951.

November 21st ; December 19th.

### SEPARATES.

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## BULLETIN

OF THE

## BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB.

Volume 71.

No. 8.

The five-hundred and seventh meeting of the Club was held at the Rembrandt Hotel, Thurloe Place, S.W.7, on Wednesday, 21st November, 1951, following a dinner at 6.30 P.M.

*Chairman* : COLONEL R. MEINERTZHAGEN.

Members present, 44 ; Guests, 18 ; Guest of the Club, Professor J. BERLIOZ, Total 63.

## The Adequacy of Bird Protection.

Colonel MEINERTZHAGEN opened this question and many Members expressed their views. The discussion was full and very interesting, but no definite conclusion was arrived at.

## Two new Races of Great Grey Shrike.

Captain C. H. B. GRANT and Mr. C. W. MACKWORTH-PRAED exhibited and described the following :—

*LANIUS EXCUBITOR BATESI*, new race.

*Description*.—Paler above than *Lanius excubitor algeriensis* Lesson, but darker than *Lanius excubitor elegans* Swainson ; rump uniform with mantle, below similar to *L. e. elegans*, and lacking the darkish grey of the breast and flanks of *L. e. algeriensis*.

*Distribution*.—Eastern Tunis.

*Type*.—In British Museum. Male adult. Between Sfax and Agareb, eastern Tunisia. 9th February, 1925. Collected by W. P. Lowe and Dr. D. A. Bannerman. Collector's No. 77. Brit. Mus. Reg. No. 1925.12.25.175.

*Measurements of type*.—Wing 105, culmen from base 24, tail 105, tarsus 30 mm.

*Remarks.*—Nine adults and three young birds examined. Wing of the nine adults, 105-112 mm.

Named in honour of the late G. L. Bates, who left a note in the box of specimens expressing the opinion that these birds differed from Great Grey Shrikes of other areas.

LANIUS EXCUBITOR DUBARENSIS, new race.

*Description.*—Above similar to *Lanius excubitor burgi* Lorenz & Hellmayr; below whiter and lacking the grey on the chest and flanks; upper tail coverts slightly paler than mantle and rump.

*Distribution.*—British Somaliland.

*Type.*—In the British Museum. Male adult. Dubar, about seven miles south of Berbera, British Somaliland, 3rd June, 1905. Collected by G. W. Bury. Collector's No. 62. Brit. Mus. Reg. No. 1905.11.27.35.

*Measurements of type.*—Wing 105, culmen from base 22, tail 102, tarsus 27 mm.

*Remarks.*—Only one specimen examined, but this was taken in June and should therefore be breeding. Sir Geoffrey Archer in a letter to us dated 12 January, 1951 agrees with us that a bird found in Somaliland in June, is almost surely resident and breeding. This specimen does not agree with any race that is found in British Somaliland in the non-breeding season and we therefore have no choice but to describe it as a local breeding race which has so far been overlooked.

A new Race of Lark from Eritrea.

Mr. K. D. SMITH sent the following description and a specimen for exhibition :—

CALANDRELLA CINEREA ASMARAENSIS, new race.

*Description.*—Differs from *Calandrella cinerea erlangeri* (Neumann) in having the forehead and crown paler chestnut; dark markings of mantle and scapulars smaller and the brown edges to the feathers broader, giving a less black appearance; black patches on sides of chest smaller; chest and flanks paler, more deep buff than chestnut.

*Distribution.*—Central and Southern Eritrea. Confined to the Plateau between 5,000 and 8,000 feet.

*Type.*—In the British Museum. Male adult, collected 12th October, 1951, near Asmara, Eritrea, by myself. Collector's No. 7. Brit. Mus. Reg. No. 1951.48.2.

*Measurements of type.*—Wing 90, culmen from base 16, tail 58, tarsus 22 mm.

*Remarks.*—A common resident, frequenting open agricultural land and moorland of a stony nature. Breeds in May and June during the rains, and I have found a belated nest in October. A clutch of two is normal. Nests found in bare ploughed fields and also in grassy meadows. Of

scanty construction, consisting of dry grass bents only, and in one case with no material at all, the eggs being laid in a hollow on the bare earth of a ploughed field. Very sedentary, wandering around during the non-breeding season in small or larger parties up to 40, and often in song. The race is represented by three specimens. The first specimen, obtained near Asmara on 21st April, 1951, was a young bird which retained some juvenile feathers and has a horn-coloured bill. The two adult males were taken in October, one near Asmara at 7,500 feet, the other near Adi Uгри at about 6,000 feet. Bills are black except for the base of the lower mandibles which are horn-coloured.

Measurements of one male are given above; the second male has a wing of 89 mm.

I am indebted to Captain C. H. B. Grant of the British Museum (Natural History) for examining the material and assisting me with the above descriptions.

### Exhibition of, and Remarks upon Dimorphism in the Female of the Rock-Bunting, *Emberiza cia cia* Linnaeus, and a Male-Feathered Female Common Redstart, *Phoenicurus phoenicurus phoenicurus* (Linnaeus).

Dr. J. M. HARRISON made the following remarks and exhibited specimens :—

Cases of male-feathering in female birds are usually associated with pathological states of the ovary and a consequent disordered function of that organ.

It is recognised widely that it is the female hormone that exerts an inhibition upon the development of male plumage in birds.

In the absence of female hormone, male plumage develops in female birds, in other words the male plumage is an asexual plumage, and is not determined by male sex hormone. That this is so has been abundantly proved both by the study of birds showing anomalies of the secondary sexual characters, Harrison, 1942 (1) as well as by much experimental work.

I am showing tonight, two types of female of the Rock-Bunting, *Emberiza cia cia* (Linnaeus).

It does not seem generally recognised that this species shows well marked sexual dimorphism, and further that the female is dimorphic, and that as well as a male-like female there is also a quite distinct and predominantly brown phase in the female sex.

Hartert, 1910-1922 (2) and Hartert and Steinbacher 1932-1938 (3), make no mention of the latter type of female, nor is it referred to by Niethammer, 1937 (4), while like the above authors, Witherby *et alia* 1938 (5) refer to the female of the Rock-Bunting as like the male though duller.

Naumann, 1897-1905 (6), on the other hand depicts the brown type of female, and was apparently quite unaware of the existence of the male-like

female, indeed he stresses the ease with which the sexes can be distinguished on account of the distinctive plumage of the female.

It would seem therefore, that in so far as the secondary sexual characters in *E. c. cia* are concerned there must be two genetically determined types of female, the one with a male-like plumage, the other possessing a distinctive female dress.

Stresemann, 1920 (7), refers to the two colour phases of the female Rock-Bunting and his remarks that he does not regard these as referable to age differences lends support to the hypothesis that they are genetically determined.

It would be of much interest if some ornithologist residing in Rock-Bunting country could determine the relative prevalence of these two forms, if this has not already been done.

My next exhibit is an adult female Common Redstart, *Phoenicurus phoenicurus phoenicurus* (Linnaeus), collected by my son, Dr. Jeffery Harrison, on May 20th, 1950, near Schœnefeld, Schleswig-Holstein, north-western Germany. In the field it was regarded as a male, but on sexing it proved to be a female with a fully formed soft egg in the oviduct.

This specimen has considerable theoretical interest, for here we have a bird in which the ovarian function must be at its maximum, i.e., the circulation must contain the follicle stimulating hormone to saturation point, and under these circumstances the expression of any male characters should be impossible, as female sex hormone inhibits maleness.

This case illustrates the fact that to some extent the secondary sex characters in birds are independent of the sex hormones, and this specimen must be regarded as a genetically determined cock-feathered hen.

However, the issue may not be quite so simple, for recent research by Pfeiffer and Kirchbaum, 1941 (8), has shown that androgen, the male sex hormone, is sometimes secreted by the ovary, and that hen Sparrows when injected with the gonadotropic hormone, the sex gland stimulating secretion of the pituitary gland, develop the black bill of the cock in its breeding dress.

- 1 Harrison, J. M., 1932, Anomalous Secondary Sexual Characters in Pheasants, *P.Z.S.* 4 Pl.
- 2 Hartert, E., 1910-1922, *Die Vög. der Paläark. Fauna*, I. 184.
- 3 Hartert, E., and Steinbacher, F., 1932-1938, *ibid.*, *Erganzungsb.*
- 4 Niethammer, G., 1937, *Handb. Deutsch. Vogelk.*, I. 133.
- 5 Witherby, H. F., *et alia*, 1938, *The Handb. of Brit. Birds*, I. 133.
- 6 Naumann, J. F., 1897-1905, *Naturgesch. der Vög. Mitteleuropas*, 3, Pl. 23, Fig. 3, and p. 200.
- 7 Streseman, E., 1920, *Avifauna Maced.*, 51.
- 8 Pfeiffer, C. A., and Kirschbaum, A., 1941, Secretion of androgen by the Sparrow ovary following stimulation by pregnant mare serum, *Yale Jnl. Biol. Med.*

## Migration in West Ireland.

Colonel MEINERTZHAGEN sent the following note :—

On the evening of 10th September 1951, between 5.30 and 7 p.m., I was at Bray Head, the most westerly point of Valencia Island. The weather was overcast, with poor visibility and a strong wind from the south-west which I estimated to be about 15 miles an hour. There was a constant stream of birds passing south, some about wave height, others about 300 feet above sea level. I identified four species—Whimbrel, White Wagtails, Wheatear and Swallows. I estimated that 500 whimbrel, 800 white wagtails, 150 wheatears and over 1,000 swallows passed during an hour and a half. The wagtails were in small scattered parties, the wheatears in very loose parties, the swallows and whimbrel in close-packed flocks. With the aid of a stop watch and a measured base, I obtained an accurate rate of flight.

Whimbrel ... 40-45 m.p.h.

Wagtails ... 20-24 m.p.h.

Swallows ... 21-23 m.p.h.

Wheatear ... 17-23 m.p.h.

The resident swallows on Valencia Island were still at their breeding stations.

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### DINNERS AND MEETINGS FOR 1951.

December 19th.

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### CORRIGENDA.

#### VOL. 70.

Page 44, line 16, for *Chlorocichla flaviventris chyulensis* read *Chlorocichla flaviventris chyuluensis*.

„ line 25, for *Chlorocichla flaviventris chyulueusis*, read *Chlorocichla flaviventris chyuluensis*.

„ vi, line 33, insert Miss G. M. Rhodes, 1949-1950.

„ xiii, line 25, for Vicent, Jack read Vincent, Jack.

#### VOL. 71.

Page 71, line 21. Replace full stop by comma after "Kapiriuta (14° 27' S., 33° 56' E.)" and add :—"the latter near Kafere (14° 30' S., 33° 42' E.)."

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